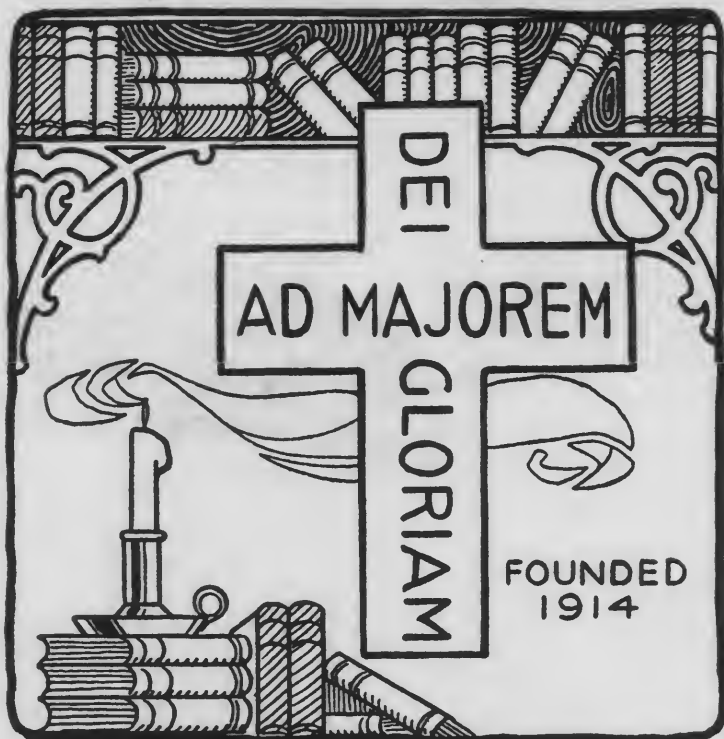


BW130
T8

School of Theology

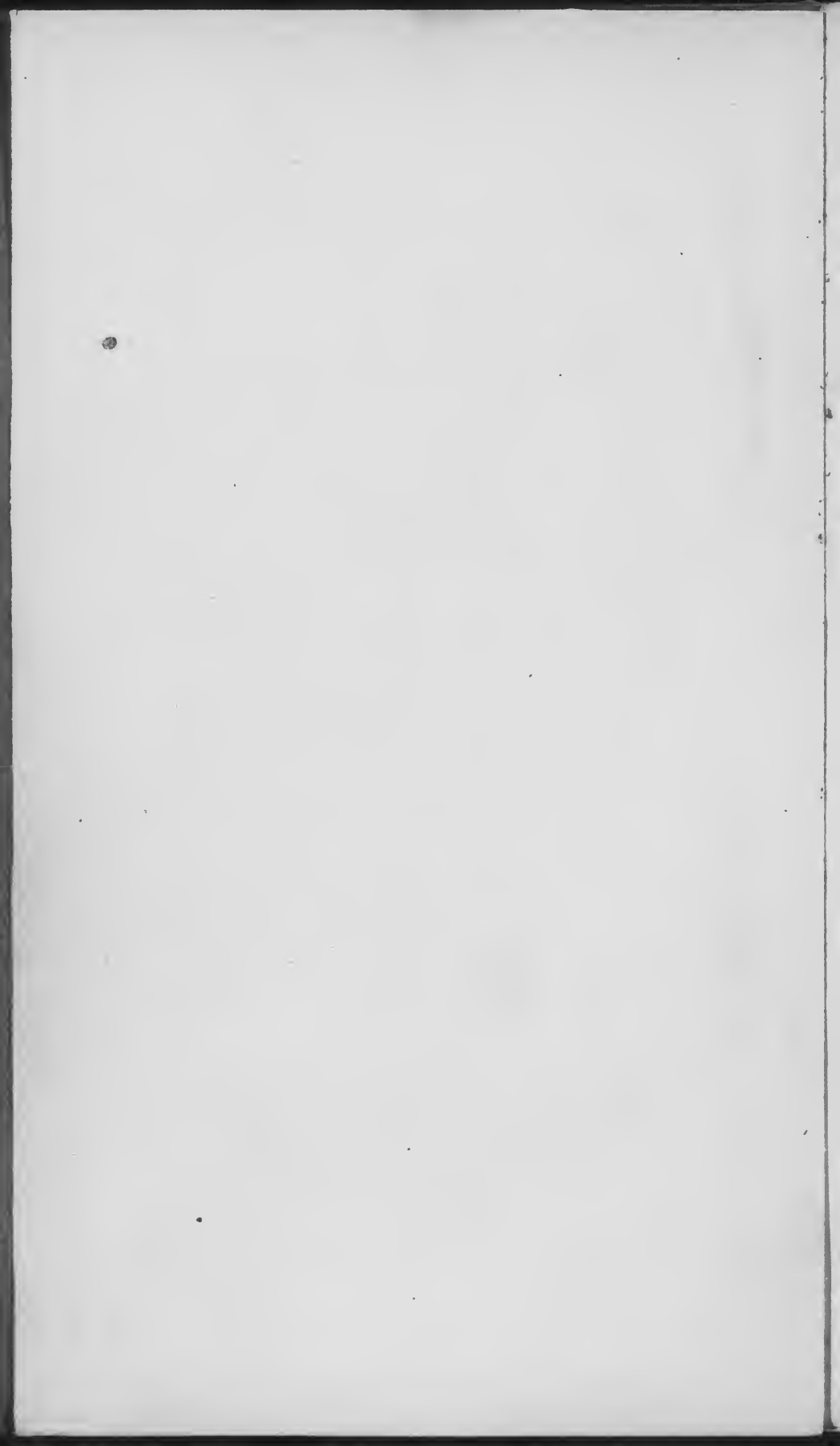


THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY

Thursfield Smith Collection, No. _____

Wes 2185





William Booth, Junr.
THE

CONSTITUTION AND DISCIPLINE

OF

WESLEYAN METHODISM:

AN ESSAY

ARGUMENTATIVE, EXPOSITORY, AND APOLOGETICAL.

IN TWO PARTS.

WITH AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

OBSERVATIONS ON "WESLEYAN METHODISM CONSIDERED
IN RELATION TO THE CHURCH, BY THE REV. RICHARD
HODGSON, M.A., EVENING LECTURER OF
ST. PETER'S, CORNHILL, LONDON."

BY GEORGE TURNER,

WESLEYAN MINISTER.

"Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus
Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."—Eph. ii. 20.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR;

SOLD BY J. MASON, 14, CITY-ROAD, & 66, PATERNOSTER-ROW;
AND F. W. CALDER, 199, OXFORD-STREET.

MDCCCXLI.

BW130
T8

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

ROCHE, PRINTER, 25, HOXTON-SQUARE, LONDON.

Wes. 2185

PREFACE.

THOUGH Methodism has now completed the first century of its existence, and though it has already produced works of the highest importance in the various branches of theology, biblical science, and religious biography, a suitable work on the subject of this Essay is still felt to be a *DESIDERATUM* in its connexional literature. How far the writer has succeeded in his attempt to supply this important deficiency, is a point on which he will not be expected to offer an opinion.

With regard to the objects of the Essay, the writer has endeavoured not only to give a correct exposition of the laws and usages of Methodism, but also to exhibit, as far as possible, the *SPIRIT* of its various institutions, and the *REASONS* upon which they are founded. He has endeavoured to prove, not that the Wesleyan system is absolutely perfect, much less that it is the *only* system sanctioned by divine authority, but that all the grand features of the Wesleyan economy are in perfect accordance with both the *letter* and the *spirit* of the New Testament; to demonstrate its superior effectiveness as a system of religious means and agencies; to

anticipate or remove plausible objections; and furnish a reply to several writers by whom it has been misrepresented and assailed.

In conducting his inquiry into the principles of church government, the writer has designedly abstained from any appeal to *uninspired* antiquity. His AUTHORITIES are, the New Testament, on the one hand, the Minutes of Conference, on the other. With regard to the first, he has sometimes confirmed his own views by a reference to approved commentators on the sacred text; and with regard to the second, he has referred occasionally to the annual Conference Address, the Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine, and a few other publications which are known to have the general approval of the Conference. On all important questions, he has quoted the *law* of the case at large; and, to facilitate reference, has marked the *year* in which each law was made, as well as specified the volume and page of the Minutes in which it is recorded.

The second part of the Essay is but an act of justice; due alike to ancient Methodism, to its friends, and to its assailants. Toward the gentleman upon whose writings we have there chiefly animadverted, we have no feeling of hostility; much less have we any toward the body of ministers with whom he is connected. Indeed, we cannot but think that under the auspices of a better system, several of them would have been much more useful than they are. By assuming the aggressive, Mr. Allin has imposed upon us the duty of self-defence;

by officiously pushing the New System into comparison with the Old, he has challenged and provoked the investigation. So far, neither he nor his friends can have any just ground of complaint.

We have bestowed the more particular attention upon the New Methodist system, because, in addition to its foolish affectation of rivalry, it exhibits the genuine results of an important experiment,—of organic change in the original constitution of Methodism.* Here, also,

* Since the Essay was finished, we have met with a special "Address to the Members of the Methodist New Connexion," by the Rev. S. Hulme. This document, which is dated Sept., 1840, refers to the unsatisfactory state of that religious community; and appears to have been written by appointment of the last Conference. The sentiments contained in the "Address" are no discredit to the excellent writer; who nevertheless appears to be willing not to see the real cause of that most lamentable state of things which he so properly deplores; namely, the all but *unmitigable vices of the system*. The following passage is a remarkable confirmation of our own views:—"The same spirit has betrayed itself in withholding from ministers that respect to which their character and office scripturally entitle them. The authority of the pastor, *as the ruler of the church*, has been reduced to a mere name; he has often been left to struggle alone; or, thwarted and dispirited, he has sunk into indifference." (P. 5.) This is not more lamentable than true. Still, those ministers who defend the *system* have no right to complain; because, sad as their condition is, it is just the condition in which the system fixes them. As ministers, they have plainly *sold* their "birthright;" and cannot, therefore, justly complain that they are not allowed to *inherit* "the blessing!"

we have been naturally led to examine those few isolated passages of Scripture which have been pressed into the service of our opponents; and thus our inquiry into the scriptural principles of church government is rendered more complete.*

The very particular view taken of the "Plan of Pacification" by the Rev. R. Hodgson, Evening Lecturer of St. Peter's, Cornhill, London, in the excellent pamphlet recently published by that gentleman on "Wesleyan Methodism in relation to the Church," seemed to require from the writer of the Essay some respectful notice. The subject itself is one of importance; and the writer does not regret the opportunity afforded him by Mr. Hodgson, of viewing it under an aspect somewhat different from that in which he had before considered it. For this purpose, a brief Appendix has been added to the Essay.

The writer of the Essay has been anxious, not only to present to the general reader a satisfactory answer to the question, "What is the constitution of Methodism?" but also to aid the inquiries of those who may desire to examine the subject more minutely and at large. In this way he hopes he may have rendered an acceptable service to some of his junior brethren, as well as to

* Several years ago we published "The Wesleyan Economy," &c. As we have no intention of reprinting that tract, we have incorporated such parts of it as related to the general argument, into the second part of this Essay.

other excellent individuals who sustain various important offices in the Connexion.

The writer will only add, that his admiration of Wesleyan Methodism is at least as sincere as it is devout. Possessing none of its connexional distinctions, he covets none. He fills no office but such as is common to every Wesleyan minister; and he is much too fond of the little leisure hereby afforded for more agreeable pursuits, to deem this circumstance either a hardship or a privation. If therefore he has written in support of authority, it is an authority to which he is himself as strictly and extensively amenable as any individual in our entire community. “Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα.” For his *principles* the writer offers no apology. That the Essay is chargeable with many imperfections is a fact of which he is deeply sensible; but he is not conscious of having blinked any question of moment, nor of having shrunk from any difficulty with which it was his duty to grapple. In fact, he has written under an honest conviction that Methodism has nothing to conceal. Bigotry he has had no care to conciliate: and he trusts nothing will be found in his pages by which charity is wounded, or of which candour will find occasion to complain.

HANLEY, *Feb.* 23*d*, 1841.

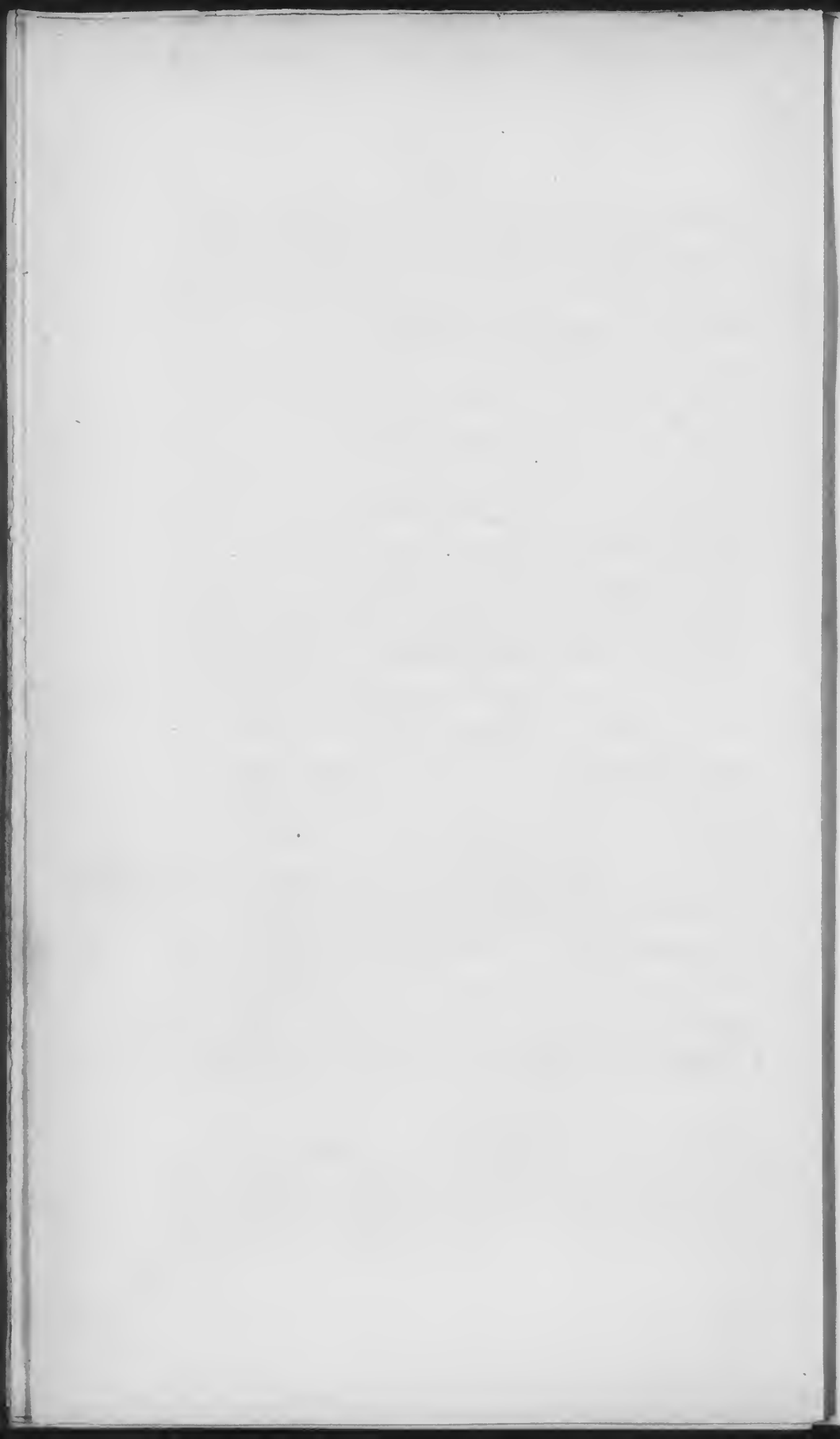


TABLE OF CONTENTS.

PART THE FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

	Page
General introductory remarks	1

CHAPTER II.

The office of the Christian ministry is a divine institution, and, by divine appointment, permanent in its character and duration	8
---	---

CHAPTER III.

The call to the Christian ministry, and the qualifications essential to its successful discharge, are also divine.....	15
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

To the immediate trust and guardianship of a scripturally appointed ministry, the Head of the church has more especially committed the sacred depositum of "sound doctrine"	22
---	----

CHAPTER V.

The general discipline of the church was originally committed into the hands of its pastors, as the guardians of its purity, and the superintendents of its administration	32
--	----

CHAPTER VI.

So far as the order of succession can be traced in the inspired records, those who had themselves been regularly inducted into the ministry, ordained their successors and fellow-	
--	--

	Page
labourers; but not without being first satisfied as to the competency of the individuals by them officially admitted into the sacred office	51
CHAPTER VII.	
Who is the pastor? And what are the duties proper to him? .	64
CHAPTER VIII.	
The diaconal department	84
CHAPTER IX.	
It is the church's duty to provide a competent maintenance for the pastor and his family: the principle of that support being neither strictly compulsory, nor purely voluntary....	96
CHAPTER X.	
Of an itinerant ministry	104
CHAPTER XI.	
Of the Connexional principle	118
CHAPTER XII.	
Of pastoral equality and conventional subordination	139
CHAPTER XIII.	
Of the legislative authority and appellate jurisdiction of the Methodist Conference	154
PART THE SECOND.	
CHAPTER I.	
Introductory remarks	178
CHAPTER II.	
Fundamental principles of the New Methodist polity.....	185

CONTENTS.

xi

Page

CHAPTER III.

The reasons by which Mr. Allin attempts to justify the adoption of the foregoing principles as the basis of pastoral government	191
---	-----

CHAPTER IV.

Lay-delegation proved to be unnecessary, and, therefore, unjustifiable upon any principle of sound Christian expediency	203
---	-----

CHAPTER V.

Lay-delegation proved to be an encroachment on the scriptural rights of the pastoral office, and, therefore, unchristian and unlawful	210
---	-----

CHAPTER VI.

General remarks ; powers of the Wesleyan ministry epitomised and vindicated ; the immoralities of faction ; causes of internal collision	222
--	-----

CHAPTER VII.

Scriptures alleged by Mr. Allin in support of the democratic form of church government, examined	232
--	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

Other scriptures examined.....	243
--------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER IX.

Remarks, detached and miscellaneous.....	252
--	-----

CHAPTER X.

Strictures on various subjects referred to in Mr. Allin's "Letters" on "the government of Wesleyan Methodism;" the Conference of 1797, and Leeds Regulations; irregular meetings and factious publications; authority of superintendents; Sunday-schools and trust estates	258
--	-----

CHAPTER XI.

Concluding observations	280
-------------------------------	-----

APPENDIX.

Observations on "Wesleyan Methodism considered in relation to the Church, by the Rev. R. Hodgson, M. A., Evening Lecturer of St. Peter's, Cornhill"	299
---	-----

THE
CONSTITUTION AND DISCIPLINE
OF
WESLEYAN METHODISM.

PART THE FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

SECTION I.

CONTEMPLATING, as its divine Founder obviously did, the perpetuity of the Christian church, it is to be presumed that he has made provision for its lasting stability, order, and edification. That the permanent existence of the church, as a visible society, necessarily implies government, must be evident; because to every society, civil or religious government is, in the nature of things, absolutely and immutably necessary. That there is a government in the church by positive divine institution, is also certain; for not only do the Scriptures directly affirm its appointment, but the same thing is also necessarily implied in various ways; for instance, where the Scriptures commend certain officers in the church for *ruling well*, and require the churches generally to "obey them that have the rule," or that are *over them*, "in the Lord." Hence, wherever the Scriptures are acknowledged to be of divine authority, the only question that can here arise must respect particular *forms* of government, or *modes* of administration.

It must be observed, that the constitution of the Christian differs widely, in this respect, from that of the Jewish church: the *details* of its polity have not been settled by its divine Lawgiver. "That Christ did not intend to set down particular positive laws for everything, as Moses did," says Hooker, "the very different manner of delivering the laws of Christ and the laws of Moses doth plainly show." And Stillingfleet has abundantly proved "that the most eminent divines that have lived since the Reformation have been all of this mind, that *no one form* (of polity) is determined as necessary for the church of God in all ages of the world." (*Iren.*, part ii., chap. viii.) In more modern times, we have the following judgment of Archdeacon Paley: "It cannot be proved that any form of church government was laid down in the Christian as it had been in the Jewish Scriptures, with a view of fixing a constitution for succeeding ages."

In this important department, therefore, as with regard to civil government, what we are to expect from holy Scripture, is general laws, or principles, chiefly. Such has been the learned judgment of the most eminent writers on this subject. "All the laws occurring in Scripture respecting church government, may be referred to these three heads: such as set down the qualifications of the persons for the office of government; such as require a right management of their office; and such as lay down rules for the management of their office." (*Iren.*, p. 182.) Hooker maintains "that sundry forms of discipline may be equally consistent with the general axioms of Scripture." And Bishop Tomline thus writes: "As it has not pleased our Almighty Father to prescribe any particular form of civil government for the security of temporal comfort to his rational creatures, so neither has he presented any particular form of ecclesi-

astical polity as absolutely necessary to the attainment of eternal happiness. But he has, in the most explicit terms, enjoined obedience to all governors, whether civil or ecclesiastical, and whatever may be their denomination, as essential to the character of a true Christian. Thus the Gospel only lays down general principles, and leaves the application of them to men as free agents." (*Elements*, vol. ii., p. 400.)

One reason for this remarkable difference between the constitution of the Jewish and Christian churches is sufficiently obvious. The Jewish was eminently the religion of *one nation*; of a people governed by the same laws, and attached to the same civil customs. The Christian is destined to become the religion of "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people;" (Rev. xiv. 6;) and must, therefore, possess the power of adapting the frame of its polity to different modes of life, and to various forms of civil government.

As to the churches founded and superintended by the apostles, our knowledge of their original constitution must necessarily be imperfect and defective; for of *that* the sacred writers have left no very particular or exact account. And even if they had done this, still, from the presence of miraculous gifts and extraordinary ministers in one, and the entire absence of these from the other, it must have been impossible for any modern church so to arrange the details of its polity as to be in full and exact conformity with the primitive model.

There are, however, as already intimated, certain great and vitally important PRINCIPLES, so clearly asserted in the Scriptures, and so distinctly sanctioned by divine authority, that *these* at least must be held sacred; yea, must be regarded as constituting the only proper and secure foundation of every truly scriptural plan of government in the church of Christ. Whilst,

therefore, it is freely admitted that "these general principles are such, that sundry forms of discipline may be equally consistent with the general axioms of Scripture," it must also be affirmed, that every plan of discipline which does not preserve these principles inviolate, is fundamentally erroneous and vicious. To ascertain these principles, is the FIRST object of the ensuing Essay.

SECTION II:

IN its infant state, the economical arrangements of the Wesleyan Connexion were, of course, both few and simple; but as the body has continued to enlarge through succeeding years, its polity has gradually assumed that finished systematic form under which it at present exists. "The organization of Methodism," says Southey, "which at this time may vie with that of any society that has ever been established, for the admirable adaptation of the means to the end proposed, was slowly developed, and assisted in its progress by accidental circumstances." (*Life of Wesley*, vol. ii., p. 391.) The Wesleyan *system* certainly never had an *ideal* existence in the mind of Mr. Wesley.* It is remarkable, on the

* "What we are, as a religious body, we have become, both in doctrine and in discipline, by the leadings of the providence of God. But for the special visitation of the Holy Spirit, that great work of which we are all the subjects, and which bears upon it marks so unequivocal of an eminent work of God, could not have existed. In that form of discipline and government which it has assumed, it was adapted to no pre-conceived plan of man. Our venerable founder kept one end only in view; the diffusion of scriptural Christianity throughout the land, and the preservation of all who had believed, through grace, in the simplicity of the Gospel. This guiding principle he steadily followed; and to that he

contrary, that one of his "reasons against separation from the Church of England," anno 1758, is thus expressed: "Because to form the plan of a new church would require infinite time and care, (which might be far more profitably bestowed,) with much more wisdom and greater depth and extensiveness of thought than any of us are masters of." (*Works*, vol. xiii., p. 194.)

One of Mr. Wesley's distinguished biographers has justly remarked, that at an early stage of his progress "he felt that a case of necessity had arisen, calling upon him to provide a ministry and a government for the people who had been raised up; a necessity which rested upon the obvious alternative that they must either be furnished with pastors of their own, or be left without sufficient spiritual aid." But even this is not the whole of that "case of necessity" by which Mr. Wesley was impelled to act. For, in addition to this want of spiritual aid, his people and that work which it was the great object of his devoted life to cherish and extend, were alike the objects of direct, persecuting hostility to the regular clergy of the day. This led to a deep and close examination of the whole question of church order. The result is well known. Mr. Wesley ultimately arrived at the only conclusion to which calm inquiry can conduct a mind endued with so much candour and penetration; viz., "That when the authority of Scripture alone is referred to in matters of church arrangement and regulation, it enjoins no particular form of administration as binding, but has left the application of certain great and inviolable principles to the

surrendered, cautiously, but faithfully, whatever, in his pre-conceived opinions, he discovered to be contrary to the indications of Him whose the work was, and to whom he had yielded himself up implicitly as his servant and instrument."—*Annual Address of 1824. Minutes*, vol. v., p. 529.

piety and prudence of those whom God may honour as the instruments of usefulness to the souls of men." (*Watson's Works*, vol. v., p. 147.) Here he finally took his stand. Upon this ground he laid the foundation of Methodism; and thenceforward adopted, from time to time, such regulations only as the course of events and the progress of the work imperatively required.

Nor was the venerable founder of Methodism less cautious or less happy in rearing the superstructure than he had been in securing its foundation. His eye was ever single. "I have the same point in view as when I set out; the promoting, as I am able, vital, practical religion: and in all our discipline I still aim at the continuance of the work which God has already begun in so many souls." (*Wesley's Works*, vol. xiii., p. 167.) In the qualities of candour, sagacity, and industry he has not often been excelled. He was too wise a man to be obstinate; and too sincere in all his actions not to remain still open to conviction, and accessible to superior light. Besides, for half a century, every movement of the machine was still under the inspection of his own eye; and he was ever ready, either to correct an error, or to remedy a defect. As he proceeded in his course, every *new* question of discipline and order was faithfully submitted to the test of Scripture; and in such matters also, "Let me be *homo unius libri*" was still his motto. And, finally, *truth* being at all times the object of his most sincere and anxious pursuit, he determined from the beginning that, in Conference, "every point" should be "examined to the foundation;" and frequently urged it upon each of his coadjutors, to "speak freely whatever was in his mind."

Now, if thus far the case have been fairly represented, and if the followers of Mr. Wesley have but faithfully adhered to *his principles* and judiciously carried out *his*

plans, it will be found, upon fair examination, that the Wesleyan polity, though *unique* in its character, is based on purely scriptural principles; and that its economical arrangements and provisions, though differing from those of other churches, are alike in strict accordance with the word of God, and eminently calculated to extend vital, practical religion in the world. To show, by a concise exposition of Wesleyan law and usage, that such is really the character of the Wesleyan constitution, is the *SECOND* object of the ensuing Essay.

CHAPTER II.

THE OFFICE OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IS A DIVINE INSTITUTION, AND, BY DIVINE APPOINTMENT, PERMANENT IN ITS CHARACTER AND DURATION.

THE fact is indisputable, that, during his sojourn upon earth, the divine Author of Christianity ordained and sent forth ministers to preach his Gospel. First, the apostles are sent forth with great solemnity. (Matt. x. 5—8.) Still farther to illustrate the nature of their commission, and the authority of their office, it is added, (verses 14, 15,) “And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.” In much the same manner the evangelist testifies that, “after these things, the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come.” The charge delivered to them also concludes in the following terms: “He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.” (Luke x. 1—16.) Again, at his final interview with the eleven, prior to his ascension, Jesus spake these solemn words: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you

always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matt. xxviii. 18, 20.)

For the same purpose we adduce Eph. iv. 8—13: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.—And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." In his Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians, likewise, St. Paul has enumerated the several orders and functions which God has appointed in the church; but here, as Bishop Burnet justly remarks, "he shows that these are not transient but lasting constitutions. For as he reckons the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, as the *gifts* which Christ at his ascension had *given* unto men, so he tells the ends for which they were given,—*for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, (the whole ecclesiastical and sacred services,) for the edifying of the body of Christ; (to which instructing, exhorting, comforting, and all the other parts of preaching, may well be reduced;)* and then the *duration* of these gifts is defined,—*till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man.* This seems to import the whole state of this life." (*Expos.*, art. xxiii.) In fact, Stillingfleet is obviously correct when he says, "This very place doth strongly assert both the *peculiarity* of the function, from the peculiarity of gifts in order to fitting men for it; and the *perpetuity* of the function, from the *end* of it, the building up of the body of Christ." (*Iren.*, p. 169.)

By thus connecting it with the triumphant ascension

of Christ, the institution of the ministerial function is invested with a solemn grandeur, to heighten which is scarcely possible. The commission to preach his Gospel throughout the world, was the first grand exercise of the Redeemer's mediatorial dominion; and the bestowment of suitable gifts for the discharge of this ministry, the first-fruits of his exaltation, the immediate result of his investiture with glory.

To view this subject a little more at large, the *perpetuity* of the sacred office is strongly evinced by the following arguments :—

FIRST, when a positive divine institution is founded upon certain clearly specified reasons, and those reasons are obviously permanent and immutable, the institution itself is plainly of perpetual use and obligation by divine appointment. Now the declared objects for which the ministerial function was ordained are lasting as the duration of the world itself; and the reasons upon which it is founded are of perpetual force and obligation. For what did Christ appoint this ministry, enriched with heavenly gifts? Plainly for the conversion and turning of sinners to God; "for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ." It follows, therefore, with indubitable certainty, that so long as there are in the world either sinners to be converted or saints to be edified; either ignorance to be removed or vice to be corrected; so long as sinful men continue to be born into the world, and it remains true that without holiness no man shall see the Lord;—that is, so long as the sun and moon endure;—so long the reasons upon which it has pleased God to found this holy institution must remain in full and equal force.*

* So the learned have always argued. "Not even is the light and heat of the sun, not even is meat and drink, so necessary for

SECONDLY, the perpetuity of the ministerial function is justly argued from the promise of the Redeemer's presence with his faithful messengers through all ages. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Thus the promise to those whose office it is to disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the adorable Trinity, and teaching them to observe all Christian ordinances, runs on in perpetuity until the coming of Christ at the end of the ages. Now, a promise of divine assistance through all ages to a function then presently to become extinct, had, of course, been an absurdity. And yet the terms of this promise, and the circumstances under which it was given, forbid its being limited to any other age than the age of the world, or the period of the Gospel dispensation; an *αιων*, in either case, bounded only by the consummation of all things. In fact, the new and *final* dispensation had already commenced: the promise, therefore, proves that the ministry is to be perpetuated throughout all time; and that the

the support and cherishing of our present life, as the apostolical and pastoral office for the preservation of the church on earth." (*Calvin's Instit.*, lib. iv., c. iii.) "The object of the ministerial office are such things which are of necessary and perpetual use: I mean, the administration of Gospel ordinances; the word and sacraments, which are appointed by Christ for a perpetual use,—the word as a means of conversion and edification,—the sacraments, not only as notes of distinction of professors of the true faith from others, but as seals to confirm the truth of the covenant on God's part toward us, and as instruments to convey the blessings sealed in the covenant to the hearts of believers. Now the very nature of these things doth imply their perpetuity and continuance in the world, as long as there shall be any church of God in it." (*Stillington, Iren.*, p. 163.) "The best system of religion must necessarily either dwindle to nothing, or be egregiously corrupted, if it is not perpetually inculcated and explained by a regular and standing ministry." (*Mosheim's Eccles. Hist.*, cent. i., part ii., chap. ii.)

words of Christ now under consideration were not addressed to the apostles only, but also to their successors in the sacred office throughout all future ages.*

THIRDLY, the care evinced by the apostles to secure *a scriptural succession* in the Gospel ministry, proves that they regarded this office not as a transient or temporary but as a lasting constitution. This care obviously extends to everything requisite for the perpetual maintenance of the sacred office;—the qualifications, duties, probation, and appointment of Ministers; the churches' duty to provide for their support, and to obey them as officers who must give account unto God; and to esteem them highly in love for their work's sake. All these things go directly to prove that the inspired writers considered the ministry as a standing ordinance in the church, and an essential branch of the Christian economy.

That the church of Christ is to continue to the end of the world is certain; for "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And God is to have "glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages." The *visible* church is, by the appointment of its divine Founder, a spiritual society; and society necessarily supposes government. Now the fact is incontrovertible, that if the Gospel ministry becomes *defunct*, so must the only kind of *rule* that God has either instituted or sanctioned in his church; and thus the divine constitution is itself dissolved. For as, on the one hand, a *society* without

* "It is to be observed, that this age being the Christian state or kingdom of Christ, that doth most distinctly begin at his resurrection, all power being then given to him; (ver. 18;) and this being the *last age*, (no other state to succeed this,) it follows, necessarily, that this age then beginning shall not conclude till the end of the world, and consequently Christ's promise hath no other period to determine it."—*Hammond*, Matt. xxviii. 20.

rule is a contradiction ; so, on the other, to abolish the Christian ministry, and to invest the government of the church in different hands, were not only to innovate upon an essential principle of the Christian economy as instituted by Christ, but to revolutionize the economy itself, and to substitute an invention of man for the ordinance of God. In a word, the visible existence of the church necessarily implies government ; the ministers of the word and the rulers of the church are, by divine appointment, one and the same ; therefore, the ministry of the word is properly coeval, co-existent with the church itself.

The principle asserted in this chapter, we regard as one of the first importance ; and, in conclusion, gladly avail ourselves of the following excellent remarks upon it by an anonymous writer on Methodism :—“ The great Head of the church has fixed this office by the exercise of his own legislative prerogative. It is a part of the system of Christianity ; and is inherent in its economical provisions. It is not an accident, to be or not to be, as circumstances may occur, but it belongs to the economy itself ; and wherever the one is established, the other, in some of its names and modifications, must co-exist. On this principle, the office of the Christian ministry rests on the highest authority, and the most secure arrangement. It is a part of the great and sublime economy which has its centre of operation on the mediatorial throne ; but which extends its exquisite and unalterable arrangements through the church and the world, for the edification of the one, and salvation of the other. In exact proportion as the mediatorial government of our Lord develops its principles, pours forth its grace, exerts its power, sets up its dominion, gains its true glories, and establishes its peace, purity, and love, in these regions of earth and sin ; in that proportion

the office of the ministry will be enriched with the *gifts* he received for men,—and, standing in humble, pure, separated, but honoured and elevated, dignity in the world, will be hailed as a divine institution, and as intimately associated with the highest grace of God, and the most valuable interests and happiness of man.” (*Illum.*, No. xi.)

CHAPTER III.

THE CALL TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, AND THE QUALIFICATIONS ESSENTIAL TO ITS SUCCESSFUL DISCHARGE, ARE ALSO DIVINE.

SECTION I.

THE sacred character of his office renders it indispensable that the minister of Christ should be holy; and an ungodly man is, by the law of Christ, absolutely disqualified for this important function. But not every holy man is authorized to assume this office. Even among men distinguished by brilliancy of talent, and eminent for personal piety, none can lawfully enter into this ministry, or effectively discharge the onerous duties of this office, "but he that is called of God." On the contrary, most evident it is, both to reason and from Scripture, that the king must appoint his own ambassador, and the master of the house his own steward; and that to "the Lord of the harvest" alone, it originally pertaineth to "send forth labourers into his harvest."*

How the Lord himself at first ordained and sent forth ministers to preach his word, has been already evinced. The Epistles of St. Paul, as they abound "in all wisdom," so do they particularly contain several pointed and instructive references to the subject of this chapter. From these it will be easy to ascertain what

* "The ministry is a matter of pure grace and favour; who then will dare to enter into it without a divine call? There is nothing in which a king would willingly be more absolute than in the choice of his ministers. And shall we dare to contest, and take away this right from the King of kings?"—*Quesnel*.

were the views of this distinguished apostle with respect to a divine appointment to the ministerial office. Thus: "Whereof I am made a minister, according to *the dispensation of God* which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God." (Col. i. 25.) "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, *putting me into the ministry.*" And shortly after: "Whereunto I am *ordained* a preacher, and an apostle, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity." (1 Tim. i. 12; ii. 7.) Again: "But our sufficiency is of God; *who also hath made us able ministers* of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." (2 Cor. iii. 6.) And again: "Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, *but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.*" (Gal. i. 1.)

Still more impressive and to the point is 1 Cor. ix. 16: "For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation is committed unto me." Οικονομίαν πεπιστευμαι: literally, "I am entrusted with a dispensation, administration, stewardship." The necessity thus laid upon him was plainly such, in the judgment of the apostle, as to leave him no alternative but, willingly or unwillingly, to preach the Gospel, or to incur the awful penalty of God's displeasure. "Yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel." Hammond paraphrases, "I am sent by God with commission to do so, and that lays an obligation upon me; and it were a damning sin if I did it not." And Dr. A. Clarke, *in loco*, observes, "As every genuine preacher receives his commission from God alone, it is God alone who can take it away. Woe to that man who runs when God has not sent him;

and woe to him who *refuses* to run, or who *ceases* to run, when God has sent him."

So distinctly do the Scriptures recognise a divine appointment or call to the Christian ministry. Nor are we at all warranted to restrict this call to the peculiar office of an apostle. In the places above cited, St. Paul does not speak of what was peculiar to his calling, as an apostle; but plainly of what concerned him in common with every minister of Christ,—the faithful, zealous, and effective preaching of the entire Gospel.

In perfect accordance with the above, is the affecting, solemn charge delivered by our apostle to "the elders of the church" of Ephesus, Acts xx. 28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." That the ordinary ministers of the church are the parties here addressed, is too plain to admit a reasonable doubt. The language is most decisive: "Over the which the HOLY GHOST hath *made*" (*εθετο*, ordained, appointed, constituted) "you overseers." Here, therefore, the direct and special agency of the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the adorable and ever-blessed Trinity, is most distinctly and unequivocally recognised in the ordinary appointment to the Christian ministry.*

* Compare Acts xiii. 2. "From each of the sacred Persons in the Godhead did this holy office originate: '*God hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.*' Yet was it also, as we have seen, '*the gift of his exalted Son;*' promised by Him to the church before his departure from the earth; communicated as the first act of his glorious power in '*filling all things;*' and sealed in every instance by his joint commission. At the same time is this office emphatically called '*the ministration of the Spirit.*' It is His authority that calls to the work; His guidance that directs in it; and His influence that supplies the needful furniture of gifts and graces." —*Bridges on the Christian Ministry.*

SECTION II.

It is scarcely necessary to remark, that Wesleyan Methodism most fully recognises the two great principles laid down in this and the preceding chapters. Agreeably to the *first* of these principles, the Methodists regard the office of the Christian ministry as an "ordinance of God," instituted by divine authority; permanent and unchanging in its essential characters, claims, and duties; a constitution which is essential to the being of a Christian church, and the functions of which are to be regulated, not by the ever-fluctuating caprice of man, but by the written and imperishable word of God.* In accordance with the *second*, every candidate for the ministry among the Methodists professes, in the fear of God, to be "moved by the Holy Ghost" to take upon him "this office and ministry." Justly has it been affirmed that, in the Wesleyan community, "no principle has been held more sacred, or guarded with more sedulous and watchful care, than this,—that no man should be recognised as a guide in the way to heaven, unless he be

* "It is the duty of our people to inform themselves, from the New Testament, on the true nature of the pastoral office; and to regard it as an ordinance of God for the perpetuation of religion, and the salvation of the world. It is not on the mere ground of its good effects, that we claim for the office the respect of our people, but on the fact of its divine appointment, and the place which it holds in the entire Christian economy. We are not ignorant that attempts are now made to place the ministerial office on a level with offices of worldly appointment, subject in its exercise to the modifications of human opinion and caprice. The acknowledgment of the divine call and appointment of the ministers of our body to their office, is essential to your own comfort and edification in receiving their message; and if this conviction is felt, it must create a conscientious respect for their pastoral character, and effectually guard you against casting any injurious imputation upon their name."—*Pastoral Address of 1835. Minutes*, vol. vii., p. 596.

walking in that way himself. Satisfactory evidence of a scriptural conversion to God, of deep and sincere piety, and of a divine call, has ever been regarded as indispensable in a Methodist preacher. No respectability of connexion, no literary acquirements, no force of natural genius and talent, could ever secure for a man admission into this ministry, in the absence of these qualifications." (*Rev. T. Jackson, Cent. Sermon.*)

As to the nature of this divine call, the Methodists are accustomed to consider it in a twofold view; that is, as both *inward* and *outward*. An inward call to the ministry necessary implies, as its basis, an holy ardent love to God; and that yearning pity for mankind, that "burning charity," which has been happily designated "*a passion* for saving souls;" together with such a conviction in the mind as renders it, with the individual, matter of conscience toward God to offer himself as a candidate for the work. In the first instance, this inward conviction may be direct, imperative, unequivocal; or it may be in a great measure the result of providential circumstances, in which "the finger of God" powerfully and clearly indicates the path of duty.* If truly of God, and not resisted, this conviction ultimately becomes settled, permanent, decisive; and involves more or less of the

* "The providential disposing of a person's circumstances, thoughts, inclinations, and studies to this main end; the disappointment of his plans for a future course in life; the unexpected and repeated closing up of worldly avenues; unlooked-for openings in the church (in the way of *usefulness, not of preferment*); some particular crisis in the individual sphere; some change or influence of family circumstances; one or more of these may prove the word behind him, saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it.' The Lord usually trains his servants to waiting, and to much conflict in their way to his immediate service. But in humble patient confidence, their 'path will be as the shining light.'"—*Bridges on the Christian Ministry*, p. 100.

apostle's feeling, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel." By an *outward call* we understand the solemn sanction of the authorities of the church to which one belongs, regularly conveyed to him according to the established forms and usages of that community. Nor is this deemed a matter of small importance. For as, on the one hand, any man may conclude erroneously upon his own case; as, on the other, the Holy Ghost has delivered certain precepts or canons, according to which the candidate for holy offices must be "proved," or *tried*, and has placed within the church an authority which is to examine and to decide in all such cases; it is reasonably judged to be the duty of one who conscientiously believes himself to be "called of God," prayerfully to submit himself to the judgment of this authority in the church, and in its final decision calmly acquiesce.

As another important principle, it has ever been assumed in Methodism, that whom God *calls* to the ministry, he qualifies with necessary *gifts*, and honours with *success*. To the all-important question, "How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost to preach?" the answer is,—

"Inquire, (1.) Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation? (2.) Have they *gifts* (as well as grace) for the work? Have they (in some tolerable degree) a clear, sound understanding? Have they a right judgment in the things of God? Have they a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly? (3.) Have they *fruit*? Are any truly convinced of sin, and converted to God, by their preaching?"—It is added: "As long as these *three marks* concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient proof that he is moved thereto by the Holy Ghost." (*Large Minutes*, p. 35.)

Indeed such is the very nature of pastoral duties, that nothing but deep and heartfelt piety to God, and fervent, self-denying love to man, can possibly secure their faithful, vigorous discharge; and without these holy principles the natural anxieties of the pastoral office can neither be appreciated nor endured. Nor does it more concern the private Christian to possess the divine assurance of his personal acceptance, than it concerns the Christian minister to retain a settled conviction that God has called him to this ministry, with all its pleasing, all its painful cares. This is his authority, his warrant, and his strength; the ground of his confidence, the assurance of his success, the promise of his final reward. These burdens, however, love can bear. And whilst the servant of God is conscious to himself that his motives are holy, and that he acts in obedience to a divine call, he will derive far more than human comfort and support from that compassionate and faithful word, "Lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world! Amen."*

* To describe at large the qualifications of a Christian pastor does not fall within the design of this Essay: seldom, however, has more been said on this subject, or said more beautifully, in so small a compass, than is contained in the following simple lines:—

"Give me the priest these graces shall possess:—
 Of an ambassador, the first address;
 A father's tenderness, a shepherd's care;
 A leader's courage, which the cross can bear;
 A ruler's awe; a watchman's wakeful eye;
 A pilot's skill, the helm in storms to ply;
 A fisher's patience, and a labourer's toil;
 A guide's dexterity, to disembroil;
 A prophet's inspiration from above;
 A teacher's knowledge; and a Saviour's love."

Bishop Kenn.

CHAPTER IV.

TO THE IMMEDIATE TRUST AND GUARDIANSHIP OF A SCRIPTURALLY APPOINTED MINISTRY, THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH HAS MORE ESPECIALLY COMMITTED THE SACRED DEPOSITUM OF "SOUND DOCTRINE."

SECTION I.

FOR all the great purposes of human salvation, the Scriptures are a perfect revelation of the divine will; and it must be equally perilous to deduct from or to add unto "the words of the prophecy of this book." Moreover, affirming itself to be the only infallible test of doctrinal truth and purity, "the word of God" secures to every man the right of private judgment; yea, makes it, in fact, the duty of all to "search the Scriptures;" and, in matters of faith, to reject whatsoever is really at variance with revealed truth. "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal. i. 8.) "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not." (2 John 9, 10.) Indeed, as a distinguished writer justly remarks, "the great Protestant principle, that the holy Scriptures are the only standard of doctrine; that the doctrines of every church must be proved out of them; and that to this standard every individual member has the right of bringing them, in order to the confirmation of his own faith; must be held inviolate, if we would not see divine authority displaced by human." (*Watson's Inst.*, vol. iii., p. 370.) No

principle is more certainly deducible from holy Scripture than this; and hence, while cautioned to "receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls," those who sit under the Gospel ministry are solemnly enjoined, not only to "take heed *how* they hear," but to "take heed *what* they hear;" and thus carefully to guard against being led away into destructive error.

And yet, even viewing the matter *a priori*, it were to be expected that, in the divine economy, pastors should be held *officially* responsible for the doctrinal purity of the churches over which they are ordained to preside. One of their relations to the church of God, is that of authorized *public teachers*. And if "the priest's lips should keep knowledge;" and if the churches "should seek the law at his mouth, because he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts;" *he* must be held pre-eminently responsible for guarding the divine purity of that law, and for preserving it in all its pristine and uncorrupted integrity.

But here, also, the principal question to be resolved is, "What saith the Scripture." The following answer cannot be deemed impertinent. "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." (1 Cor. iv. 1.) Upon which Poole remarks: "Ministers are stewards of the mysterious doctrines and institutions of Christ, which we usually comprehend under the terms, 'the word and sacraments.'" Of these holy mysteries the apostle calls himself a steward, to intimate, says the learned Macknight, "that the deepest doctrines, as well as the first principles, of the Gospel, were entrusted to him to be dispensed and made known." Of course, the notion of a steward, in such a case, must necessarily imply a strict *official* responsibility; and so the apostle adds, "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

Again, speaking of himself in conjunction with Silas and Timotheus, two "able ministers of the New Testament," St. Paul says, "But as we were allowed of God *to be put in trust with* the Gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts." (1 Thess. ii. 4.) That with which these ministers of Christ were "allowed of God to be put in trust," is in the context called "the Gospel of God;" and they plainly regarded it as one of their first and highest duties to God; a duty arising out of the very nature of this *trust*, against all opposition and at every hazard, to preserve *his* Gospel unmutilated, pure, and incorrupt. Hence, though they were indeed "shamefully handled," persecuted by some, maligned by others, and in the midst of "much contention," they dared not to have recourse either to *deceit*, or *guile*, or "flattering words." They knew that the account of their stewardship must be rendered unto God, by whom alone they were "allowed to be put in trust;" and upon this pure and lofty principle they acted in the exercise of their ministry. "Even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts." Under this deep and impressive view of the matter it plainly was, that our apostle penned the following words: "The glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was *committed to my trust*."

That St. Paul regarded his coadjutors in the ministry as being entrusted with a similar charge, is also plain from his Epistles to Timothy and Titus. "O Timothy, keep that which is *committed to thy trust*," &c.—"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That *good thing* which was *committed unto thee* keep by the Holy Ghost." (1 Tim. vi. 20; 2 Tim. i. 13, 14.)

So far as the subject of this chapter is concerned, *two things* are plainly and imperatively required of "the

ministers of Christ" as "stewards of the mysteries of God." (1.) In all their ministrations to *hold fast* "the faithful word," the pure and unsophisticated doctrines of our only God and Saviour Jesus Christ; on no account shunning to declare "all the counsel of God;" nor at their peril, and as they must answer it to God, daring to preach any "other Gospel." (2.) To mark the first developments and to check the progress of pernicious error; giving no countenance to the propagators of false doctrines; nor, on any account, suffering them to teach in those churches over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers.

The first of these positions will not be disputed: the second is but a fair deduction from what has gone before. In support of *that*, however, we may adduce the following scripture: "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine." (1 Tim. i. 3.) From which it has been justly concluded, that Timothy was invested with a power "authoritatively to command seducers not to preach another doctrine than what was taught by the apostles. A divine rule," adds the learned annotator, "and most worthy of perpetual observation by all in the office of the ministry." (*Poole.*) A farther confirmation of this position we have in Rev. ii. 20; from which we learn that *one* of the "few things" which the Lord had *against* the angel of the church in Thyatira was, that he had *suffered* a certain seducer "to teach and to seduce" the faithful. A demonstrative proof that those pastors of churches, who either tamely or indolently *suffer* erroneous teachers to seduce the people of their charge, are highly criminal in the sight of God.

The published Confessions of particular churches are but a public *declaration* of the sense in which such churches severally interpret holy Scripture on all the

more principal doctrines of the Christian revelation; and in this respect such formularies are not only lawful but important. The right of private judgment is entirely out of the question. The Christian minister is a public teacher; and, certainly, whilst sincere in its belief that the doctrines repudiated are unscriptural and dangerous, every church has a manifest right to silence within its own pale the preaching of all doctrines that are contrary to the received standards.* “Nor is there any thing in the exercise of this authority contrary to Christian liberty, since the members of any communion, and especially the ministers, know beforehand the terms of fellowship with the churches whose confessions of faith are thus made public; and because, also, where conscience is unfettered by public law, they are neither prevented from enjoying their own opinions in peace, nor from propagating them in other assemblies.” (*Watson’s Inst.*, vol. iii., p. 372.)

SECTION II.

IN these respects the Wesleyan constitution is not singular. It is a fact generally known, that *the first four*

* To determine what doctrines shall be *publicly taught* in a Christian community, is one thing; to fetter *private judgment*, is another. “However proper it is for a church to tolerate persons who entertain opinions differing from their own, the case is materially changed with regard to those who are not contented to enjoy their opinions in private, or to converse about them in a modest manner as private individuals; but who, under the cloak of an authorized public ministry, endeavour to impose upon their hearers doctrines different from those which their church professes, and which they expected to be taught.”—*Biblical Theology from Storr and Flatt*, p. 213.

volumes of Sermons, and certain "Notes on the New Testament," published by the late Rev. John Wesley, constitute the doctrinal standard of the Methodists. These writings contain those great leading views of divine truth which, and which alone, are publicly taught and sanctioned by the Conference; and the Wesleyans, as a body, sincerely believe that a purer, nobler system of scriptural divinity cannot be found in writings uninspired, than that which is contained in these volumes. To which we must add, that the legal settlement of the Methodist chapels is such as expressly to require that, in these chapels, "*no other doctrines*" shall ever be preached. Thus, like the copy of the law deposited in the ark, covered by the mercy-seat, and protected by overshadowing cherubim, the Methodist doctrines are placed as far as possible beyond all danger of corruption or deterioration; and thus the strongest possible security is taken for the doctrinal purity and vitality of the Methodist ministry, even to the latest times.

But though Methodism has thus placed the purity of its faith as far as possible beyond the reach of danger, a solemn responsibility still rests upon its ministers as the scriptural and living guardians of its orthodoxy. On the following points, the Conference stands solemnly pledged before God and man, and is, therefore, bound by every sacred tie and obligation:—(1.) Fully and distinctly to preach this faith in all its various branches; maintaining not only the letter but the spirit of all its doctrines. (2.) To exercise a constant, vigilant inspection into the doctrinal views of its own members; and, on no account, to suffer the propagation of opinions that are Methodistically heterodox. (3.) To examine with the utmost care and impartiality every candidate for the ministry among us, both as to the extent of his theological attainments, and the soundness of his doctrinal

belief. And, (4.) On no consideration to admit to a participation in its united ministry, any man with whose doctrinal views it may have just cause to be dissatisfied.

A moment's reflection must convince any man that all this is really necessary to the conservation of doctrinal purity; and for *that* the Conference is every way responsible. To the Wesleyan body, the Conference stands solemnly pledged "to preach the old Methodist doctrines, and no other." And the constitution of Methodism unequivocally accounts of its united pastorate "as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God,—allowed of God to be *put in trust* with the Gospel." To render this fact indisputably plain, it is only necessary to remark, that while the right of the Conference to appoint preachers to the several chapels in the Connexion is secured only upon this condition,—
"Provided always that the persons so to be appointed by the Conference shall preach no other doctrines than those which are contained in certain Notes upon the New Testament, and the first four volumes of Sermons, published by the late Rev. John Wesley;" the Deed of Declaration, enrolled by Mr. Wesley in the High Court of Chancery, expressly provides, that "the Conference shall and may admit into connexion with them, or upon trial, *any person or persons whom they shall approve*, to be preachers and expounders of God's holy word." Thus, from the beginning, this grave responsibility was intentionally thrown upon the Conference by Mr. Wesley himself; who, by thus subjecting every candidate for the ministry to its approval or disapproval, has constituted it the ultimate judge of ministerial qualification. The trust imposed by Methodism upon the Conference is precisely this: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to

faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. ii. 2.) And thus, in another vitally important particular, Methodism is found to harmonize with the principles of the New Testament; while it holds its ministers strictly and officially responsible for the doctrinal purity of all the churches in its extensive Connexion.

On this clearly scriptural and prominently Wesleyan principle, the Conference has hitherto acted, in the fear of God, with laudable fidelity. The following successive enactments exhibit the rule of its conduct, and sufficiently attest its anxious concern to keep that which has been committed to its care:—

"Q. 17. Are not some of the younger preachers in danger of departing from our leading doctrines?

"A. We fear they are; and resolve that, in future, before any preacher be admitted into full connexion, he shall be required to give a full and explicit declaration of his faith, as to those doctrines, in the presence of the Conference."—*Anno* 1805. *Minutes*, vol. ii., p. 290.

"Q. 23. What additional resolution can be passed, in order to preserve our societies from heresies and erroneous doctrines?

"A. No person shall, on any account, be permitted to retain any official situation in our societies, who holds opinions contrary to the total depravity of human nature, the divinity and atonement of Christ, the influence and witness of the Holy Spirit, and Christian holiness, as believed by the Methodists."—*Anno* 1807. *Minutes*, vol. ii., p. 403.

"The Chairmen of our Districts are required not only to examine very minutely in their District-Meetings, all persons proposed to travel as preachers among us; but also to report distinctly in their District Minutes, for the consideration of the Conference, the opinion of the District-Meetings, after such examination, respecting their *health*, *piety*, and *moral character*, ministerial *abilities*, belief of our *doctrines*, attachment to our *discipline*," &c.—*Anno* 1810. *Minutes*, vol. iii., p. 158.—Repeated *anno* 1827. *Minutes*, vol. vi., p. 279.

"Q. 17. Can any additional methods be devised, in order to promote the mental improvement of our preachers?

"A. 1. The Chairman of Districts shall, at each District-Meeting, examine every preacher on trial, respecting the course of theological reading which he may have pursued in the course of the preceding year. For this purpose, every such preacher is required to deliver to the Chairman of his District, a list of the books which he has read since the preceding District-Meeting. These lists shall be laid before the meeting, that the senior brethren may have an opportunity of giving to the junior preachers such advices and directions respecting their studies as may appear to be necessary.

"2. Before any preacher, having travelled four years, is recommended by his District-Meeting for admission into full connexion, he shall undergo a careful examination, by the Chairman of that meeting, respecting his acquaintance with Mr. Wesley's Works in general, and especially with his Sermons, and his Notes on the New Testament, *in addition to the other examinations* required by our existing rules: and no preacher shall be so recommended, unless the result of his examination be satisfactory to the meeting."—*Anno 1815. Minutes*, vol. iv., p. 122.

"Q. 27. What additional regulations are judged proper, in respect to preachers received on trial?

"A. 1. No person shall in future be deemed eligible for examination at any District-Meeting, as a candidate for reception, even on trial, into our itinerancy, unless his superintendent be able to certify on his behalf, that he has previously read with care our standard doctrinal works; namely, Mr. Wesley's Notes on the New Testament, and his first four volumes of Sermons."—*Anno 1825. Minutes*, vol. vi., p. 64.*

* "The Conference resolve, That it is the *acknowledged right*, and, under existing circumstances, the *indispensable duty*, of every Chairman of a District, to ask all candidates for admission upon trial among us, if they believe the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ as it is stated by Mr. Wesley, especially in his Notes upon the first chapter of the Epistle to the

To the doctrines contained in these volumes, the Conference still requires the solemn and unreserved subscription of every candidate for the Methodist ministry; and one of the questions annually proposed respecting every minister in the Wesleyan Connexion is, "Does he *believe* and *preach* our doctrines?" to which an explicit answer must be given and recorded.

Hebrews, to be agreeable to the holy Scriptures; and, that it is also the *acknowledged right*, and, under existing circumstances, the *indispensable duty*, of the President of the Conference for the time being, to examine particularly upon that doctrine every preacher proposed to be admitted into full connexion, and to require an explicit and unreserved declaration of his assent to it, as a truth revealed in the inspired oracles."—*Anno 1827. Minutes*, vol. vi., p. 280.

CHAPTER V.

THE GENERAL DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCH WAS
ORIGINALLY COMMITTED INTO THE HANDS OF ITS
PASTORS, AS THE GUARDIANS OF ITS PURITY, AND
THE SUPERINTENDENTS OF ITS ADMINISTRATION.

SECTION I.

DURING the Saviour's sojourn upon earth, he exercised supreme authority among his followers; but from the period of the Lord's ascension, the government of the church was vested in the apostles, subject only to the authority of their divine Master. We are informed by St. Luke, (Acts i. 3,) that to the apostles "Jesus showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:" also, that during this solemn interval between his resurrection and ascension, he gave them certain "commandments," doubtless for the regulation of their own conduct in the propagation of the Gospel, and in the constitution of the churches. From St. John we further learn, that, immediately after his resurrection, Christ thus addressed the apostles: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John xx. 21—23. Compare also Matt. xxviii. 18—20.) Indeed, a careful examination of the Scriptures abundantly confirms the following statement:—"In the churches which they founded, the apostles retained the chief authority, and had all other ministers, of whatever

quality, under them; as appears from St. Paul's Epistles to Timothy and Titus, indited in a style which sufficiently speaks a superiority over them. And in virtue of their commission from Christ, they exercised a power of making such laws and constitutions as were found necessary for the good government of the church; of enforcing these laws, with such penalties as the nature of transgressions required; of ejecting the incorrigible from the communion of the saints; of pardoning and receiving the penitent; of conferring the gifts of the Holy Ghost; of choosing proper persons to administer in holy offices; and of appointing their successors to rule and preside in the church." (*Gleig's Stackhouse*, vol. iii., p. 482.)

Such is the testimony of Archbishop Potter. If the learned advocate for diocesan episcopacy be deemed a questionable witness, we produce another, whose occasionally ultra-democratical notions respecting the primitive discipline of the church, must render his testimony on this point unexceptionable:—"In order to have a just idea of the nature, privileges, and authority of the apostolic function, we must consider an apostle as a person who was honoured with a divine commission; invested with the power of making laws; of controlling and restraining the wicked, when that was expedient; and of working miracles when necessary: and sent to mankind to unfold to them the divine will; to open to them the paths of salvation and immortality; and to separate from the multitude, and unite in the bonds of one sacred society, those who were attentive and obedient to the voice of God addressed to men by their ministry." (*Mosheim's Eccles. Hist.*, cent. i., part ii., chap. ii.) Substantially the same is Calmet's estimate of the powers with which the Lord entrusted his apostles: thus, "He invested them with his authority; filled them with his

Spirit; trusted them particularly with his doctrine and services; and chose them to raise the edifice of his church."

Before we proceed to inquire with whom the apostles deposited this important trust, that is, so far as it was transferable to others, we must first briefly advert to the manner in which they exercised the powers above enumerated. Some there are, who not only contend for unlimited popular control in the spiritual government of the church, and thus annihilate the scriptural authority of the *pastoral office*, but who, to find a pretext for this unscriptural innovation, do likewise, in effect, reduce the apostolic authority itself to a nonentity. Thus, in the very page above quoted, even Dr. Mosheim strangely affirms, that "*the people* were undoubtedly first in authority;" that "the same people rejected or confirmed by their suffrages the laws that were proposed by their rulers;"* and, in a word, "exercised all that authority which belongs to such as are invested with the *sovereign power*." All this, too, in the presence of the apostles themselves; who, it is further said, "showed, by their own example, that nothing of moment was to be carried on or determined without the consent of the assembly."

According to Mosheim, then, THE APOSTLES were, in virtue of their "divine commission," invested with "the power of making laws;" and yet THE PEOPLE, exercising

* "Mosheim attributes a great extent of general power to the people, &c. We are not aware on what authority he advances these assertions." (*Hist. of the Church, from the earliest Ages to the Reformation, by the Rev. Geo. Waddington, A.M., p. 23.*) For these assertions it would be difficult to produce any authority at all. If, however, Mosheim's view could be established, it would certainly place the words of St. Paul in a new light; namely, *πρεσβευω εν αλυσει*,—"I execute the office of an ambassador in chains!"

“all that authority which belongs to such as are invested with the *sovereign power*,” are left at liberty, by their suffrages, either to confirm or to reject these laws. So that, in fact, two independent oracles are set up,—*vox populi, et vox Dei*. And should it so happen that, being consulted on some important point of legislation, these oracles should give a contrary response, it is but a fair deduction from the foregoing representation, that the *former* must prevail against the *latter*,—the voice of the people *against* the voice of God! We pass on, however, to a brief survey of the manner in which the apostles really did administer the government of the church.

The Epistles to the Corinthians will furnish several illustrations. The first is the case of the incestuous person, whose *sentence* Paul himself “determined,” and whose excision from the church the same apostle authoritatively commands. (1 Cor. v. 3—5.) The second respects a certain false teacher, and the entire party by which he was supported in the church of Corinth. One of the first intimations given by St. Paul of his intentions with respect to this powerful and injurious faction is this, “But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.—What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?” (1 Cor. iv. 19, 21.) By the “rod” some understand “ecclesiastical censures;” others, “the power of inflicting punishments,” as *blindness* upon Elymas, or *death* upon Ananias and Sapphira. And it deserves remark, that though the apostle *professedly forbears* either to “boast of the authority” given to him by Christ, or “to terrify” his adversaries “by letters,” still he plainly intimates to the latter that the only alternative left them was, timely submission, or such

exemplary punishment as he both could and would inflict.

Again, 2 Cor. x. 2: "I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some." While, however, the apostle thus deprecates the employment of severity, he plainly stands unmoved from his original purpose: "Having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled." (Ver. 6.) About half a year had now elapsed since this holy apostle, in much grief of soul, had penned his first Epistle to this revolted church. The effect of *that* had been most salutary: grief, remorse, and terror had wrought effectually upon the mass; and not a few had "sorrowed unto repentance." When he received the tidings of this reformation, the feelings of the apostle were such as might have been expected: "I am filled with comfort, I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulations." And protesting, in a strain of most tender and impassioned eloquence, the sincerity of his affection for them all, he adds, "Ye are in our heart, to die and to live with you." As many, however, as still continued refractory, are again menaced with such an exertion of apostolic power as should amply "revenge all disobedience;" though that might yet be deferred until the obedience of the rest should be "fulfilled." Dr. Bloomfield, with whom the best commentators agree, remarks, "It should seem that he deferred exercising the supernatural power of inflicting judgments, entrusted to him by God, until, by warning and giving time for repentance, he should have brought back as many as possible to obedience." And whereas some had spoken of "his letters" as being "weighty and powerful,"—that is, severe, authoritative, menacing,—the apostle adds: "Let such an one think this, that such as we are in *word* by letters

when we are absent, such will we be also in *deed* when we are present." This painful subject is resumed once more, chap. xiii. 2: "I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I *will not spare*." As a further illustration of this apostle's mode of dealing with incorrigible offenders, we might add 1 Tim. i. 20: "Of whom is Hymenæus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." And that St. Paul was not the only apostle who exercised such power, is evident from 3 John 10.

St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians we hold to be decisive upon another point; namely, that it was the custom of this apostle, himself authoritatively to settle and determine questions of ecclesiastical order and church discipline. The evidence of this is of that incidental character which seldom fails to produce conviction in the candid mind. "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." (1 Cor. xi. 2.) The word "ordinances" is properly supposed to refer to certain authoritative precepts which the apostle had delivered to the church, with respect to matters of *order*. From this chapter it is, however, plain that some highly censurable irregularities had crept into the assemblies for divine worship. The first point of this nature is involved in the following question: "Is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?" The decision of which we find at ver. 16: "If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." With which might be compared, chap. xiv. 34, "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak;" and 1 Tim. ii. 12, "I SUFFER NOT a woman to teach," &c. The next concerns the cele-

bration of "the Lord's supper." In this matter the order formerly delivered by our apostle had manifestly been violated; an irregularity which he severely reprehends. Then, having given such directions as the case immediately requires, Paul concludes, "And the rest will I SET IN ORDER when I come;" plainly referring to whatever might need correcting, either in this or in any other department of ecclesiastical discipline. To which may be added 1 Cor. vii. 17, "And so ORDAIN I in all the churches;" and 1 Cor. xvi. 1, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, AS I HAVE GIVEN ORDER to the churches of Galatia, so do ye."

In the same high tone of apostolic authority, St. Paul speaks throughout the whole of 1 Cor. xiv.; in which he not only delivers a series of "ordinances" for the better regulation of their religious assemblies, but likewise claims for these *apostolic decreta* the force and authority of *divine precepts*: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that *the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.*" (Ver. 37.) And we have before adverted to the fact, that the Epistles to Timothy and Titus authoritatively dictate the canons, according to which these distinguished evangelists were required to "set in order" whatever might concern the spiritual edification and good government of "the house of God."

The reader must now determine whether the apostle was accustomed to speak and to act in the churches "as one having authority:" or whether, as some affirm, the "ambassador of Christ" submissively deferred in everything to the popular voice; whilst *the people* "exercised all that authority which belongs to such as are invested with the sovereign power."

SECTION II.

THAT some of the powers vested in the apostles were of an extraordinary character, peculiar to the apostles themselves, and never to be transmitted to others, is granted by all : that some of these were designed to be perpetual in the church, is a position as little liable to dispute. The question is, To whom does the ordinary administration of church discipline and government scripturally and properly belong ? To the members of the church generally ; or to its pastors, as an order divinely constituted for this and other specific purposes ?

That Timothy and Titus were largely entrusted with this authority, must be plain to every impartial reader of the New Testament. To adduce the proof of this in detail, would be literally to transcribe the whole of St. Paul's Epistles to these two evangelists. To one important branch of ecclesiastical power with which they were invested, we shall speak separately ; namely, the power of adjudicating on the question of ministerial qualification, and of ordaining to the office of the ministry. Here we observe, that, besides the clearly demonstrable fact that to them are directed all the qualifications of such as might be made either bishops or deacons, to us the following points appear to be incontrovertible :—Timothy was empowered to make regulations for the orderly celebration of divine worship ; to see that public teachers taught no other doctrines than what they had received from the Lord and his inspired disciples ; to forbid women to teach ; to ordain properly qualified persons for the office of the ministry ; to provide for the competent maintenance and due respect of church offices ; to take cognizance of accusations ;

publicly to rebuke them that sin; and to administer such censure as the nature of offences might require. Titus, also, was not only empowered to "ordain elders" in the several cities of Crete, but also to "set in order" the things that were wanting. And besides the general command to "exhort and rebuke with all authority," this particular injunction was likewise laid upon him: "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject."

Nor is there any just ground to quarrel with the common translation of *παραιτου*, *reject*. Macknight paraphrases, "cast him out of the church;" and adds, "By this apostolic canon, an obstinate heretic, after a first and second admonition without effect, is to be cast out of the church, to prevent the faithful from being led astray by his false doctrines and vicious example." Precisely the same word occurs 1 Tim. v. 11, where it is applied to such widows as were to be *rejected*, in opposition to such as were to be *admitted* into the number. An heretic, says Dwight, "is a sower of divisions, or the leader of a faction in the church." Such an one Titus is commanded, after solemn admonition, officially to *reject*; for even Dwight himself allows, that discipline was in this case to be administered "by Titus himself, in the character and office of a minister."

Against this interpretation, two objections are urged by a learned and strenuous advocate for congregational independence. According to Dr. Gill, this sense is to be rejected, (1.) Because, whoever Titus might be, "an extraordinary or ordinary minister, he had no right or power of himself to reject or eject any person from church communion." But the *petitio principii* is surely too palpable to need pointing out. (2.) The doctor adds, "Besides," thus understood, the passage "would prove

that the power of excommunication lies in the hands of a bishop or presbyter, elder or pastor, of a church, and not in the church itself; and it would not be easy to rescue such a proof out of their hands." (*Divinity*, vol. ii.) So we also think. But, of course, we do not regard this as any valid ground of objection to what we deem a fair and just interpretation of the Scripture. That Titus was really invested with such a power, is still farther apparent from 2 Cor. vii. 15: "With fear and trembling ye received him;" evincing at once a consciousness of guilt and the dread of punishment.

We now come to a class of scriptures, which are the more important and decisive because they obviously refer to the ordinary powers of that ministry which was designed to be perpetual in the church. Thus, a bishop must not only be "apt to teach," but also "one that *ruleth well* his own house." (1 Tim. iii. 4.) No matter how learned or how pious he may be, or how able to teach, if he possess not the capacity for *ruling well*, he is destitute of one scriptural qualification for the sacred office. The reason is thus assigned: "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" The position of a minister in "the church of God" is here plainly assumed to be that of a spiritual ruler. So 1 Peter v. 2—4: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof," &c. Here the church of God is represented as A FLOCK, of which ministers are, not indeed the lords, but the shepherds; of course, in subordination to Christ, to whom they are accountable, and from whom, if faithful, they shall receive "a crown of glory that fadeth not away." We render, "*Feed* the flock." That, however, is plainly but *one branch* of the duty here enjoined. It is generally allowed, (and to deny it would be absurd,) that the

verb ποιμαίνειν is sufficient to denote even the highest degrees of authority;* not excepting even that of Christ himself, who, as the Proprietor, Keeper, Lord, and Life of all, is in this very passage called ὁ ἀρχιποιμην, the Chief Shepherd. This scripture, therefore, as clearly asserts the *subordinate* rule and authority of the Christian pastor, as it asserts the *supreme* authority and government of Christ himself. Moreover, the pastor is here required to act as a *bishop* or *overseer*; exercising a mild and spiritual, but at the same time, a vigilant and effective, superintendence in the church.

We next refer to 1 Tim. v. 17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."† These words plainly distinguish the two great branches of the ministerial work,—the spiritual rule, and the ministry of

* "That the Greek word, ποιμαίνω, a derivative of which is here translated 'feed,' signifies *to rule*, in the most extensive manner, can be doubted by no man at all conversant with the Greek language, either in the classics or the New Testament."—*Dwight*. Compare Rev. ii. 27.

† By "honour," says Dr. A. Clarke, almost every critic of note allows, is here meant, "reward, stipend, wages." Dr. Bloomfield adds, that the best expositors, ancient and modern, are agreed, that the word *double* is to be taken in the sense of *liberal*. And upon the whole passage Bishop Hopkins very justly remarks: "Here, by the way, we may see how groundless their assertion is, who from this place establish an order, new and unknown to the church of God till of late, of *lay-ruling elders*. For if this text gives them any such *authority*, it gives them the *double honour* too; and so consequently, by divine right, they may challenge maintenance from the people, as well as the ministers themselves." (*Exposition*, p. 328.) The context shows that only one *order* of persons are contemplated, namely, *the regular stipendiary ministry*.—*Vide Doddridge's Lectures*, prop. cl., schol. 5. *Campbell's Lectures on Eccles. Hist.*, lect. vi.

the word; both of which are here and elsewhere unquestionably included in the duties of the pastoral office. To rule and to preach are functions common to every Christian pastor; but every man has his gift from God, one man's differing from another's. Some able and successful preachers have been but comparatively ill qualified *to rule*: others have been peculiarly qualified for *ruling well*; with wisdom, firmness, love; in the fear of God, and to the great advantage of the church. And because so much must ever depend upon the piety, prudence, fortitude, diligence, and Christian temper of those to whom the government of the church is more immediately confided, those ministers who have excelled in this most responsible and difficult department, though sometimes by no means eminent as *preachers*, have ever been counted worthy of special honour. But surely the highest reverence and esteem are justly due to him that is so happy as to excel in both; being alike prudent and successful as an OVERSEER or SUPERINTENDENT of the church's discipline, and painfully diligent as a distinguished PREACHER of the faithful word.*

* Even Campbell allows that 1 Tim. v. 17, is no authority for lay-ruling elders, so called. The following observation from Stillfleet deserves attention. Having quoted the apostle's words, he says: "Not as though it implied a distinct sort of elders from the pastors of churches, but among those elders that were ordained in the great churches, some attended most to ruling the flock already converted, others laboured most in converting others to the faith by preaching; though both these, being entered into this peculiar function of laying themselves out for the benefit of the church, did deserve both respect and maintenance; yet especially those who employed themselves in converting others, inasmuch as their burden was greater, their labours more abundant, their sufferings more, and their very office coming the nearest to the apostolic function."—*Iren.*, p. 336.

Of the same class is 1 Thess. v. 12 : "Now we beseech you, brethren, to know them which *labour* among you, and are *over you* in the Lord, and *admonish* you." In this place, Macknight, without reason, distinguishes *three classes* of ecclesiastical officers. Hammond, who justly supposes the different functions indicated in the text to belong to the same office, without reason concludes that diocesan bishops are here intended. Certainly, no duty or authority is here implied but what the sacred writers generally attribute to the office of a presbyter. Poole is, therefore, more correct, who understands the place of ministers or pastors generally, described, not by name, but by the several functions of their office. In perfect harmony with this interpretation, is Heb. xiii. 7, 17 : "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God.—Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account." Where, again, it is made clearly manifest that those who laboured in the work of the ministry, that is, who preached the word of God, and watched for the souls of his people, were also invested with the *spiritual rule*, oversight, and superintendence of the church. In support of this view of the text, numerous authorities might be produced; but the words themselves require no comment.

The last scripture to which we shall here refer, is Acts xx. 28 : "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." The parties here addressed are the ordinary ministers of the church, called indifferently elders and bishops, or overseers. They were spiritual pastors, divinely appointed

to feed, to superintend, and guide "the church of God." Of course such an office necessarily implies authority; and, as we have remarked already, the verb *ποιμαίνειν*, by some rendered *to rule*, and by others *to feed*, properly includes *both* these ideas.

Thus the distinction between the pastors of the church and the laity, together with the *pastoral rule* of the former, is constantly affirmed by the inspired writers; and however difficult or even impossible it may be to form an accurate idea of the *exact form* of government first adopted by the Lord's apostles, that certainly must be a voluntary dulness of perception which does not recognise in their writings a steady and uniform assertion of the principle laid down at the head of this chapter, namely, that the general discipline of the church was originally committed into the hands of its pastors, as the guardians of its purity, and the superintendents of its administration. On this subject we hold the following conclusions to be both just and scriptural:—

First: pastoral authority has its foundation in *the ordinance of God*. This is as certain as that the pastoral office is of divine appointment. For, "supposing such a society as the church is, to be of divine institution, and that Christ hath appointed officers to rule it, it necessarily follows, that those officers must derive their power, that is, their right of governing this society, not merely from consent and confederation of parties, but from that divine institution on which the society depends." (*Stillingfleet*.)

Secondly: in its character and objects, the authority of the Christian pastor is entirely *spiritual*. Much mischief has arisen from the want of due attention to this obvious fact. The distinction between temporal and spiritual matters is indeed ancient; but the things themselves have been lamentably confounded. Nothing, in fact,

can be more unlike than the ecclesiastical and scriptural definition of things spiritual. Certain it is, that the word of God confers upon the Christian pastor no authority whatever but such as is really necessary for the maintenance of order, peace, and purity in the church, as a society instituted for divine worship and joint religious communion. Lordship or dominion it is not, in any sense of the word; least of all is it *secular* dominion. Most decisive upon this point are the words of Christ to his apostles: "The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you." (Matt. xx. 25.) As the ministers of Christ, their authority must necessarily be confined to his kingdom: and *that* kingdom is "not of this world;" not secular, but spiritual; not earthly, but divine.*

* To suppose the apostles were here forbidden to exercise a spiritual authority in the church, is absurd. The truth affirmed is simply, that secular power and temporal aggrandizement would constitute no part of the glory of that kingdom which he was about to establish, and by which his ministers were to be distinguished. We quote the following from Mr. Watson's luminous exposition of the passage:—"It is not merely the *degree* but the *kind* of dominion exercised by the princes of the Gentiles in their kingdoms, which our Lord excludes from his church. And when it is considered that the government which Christ and his apostles have established in the church is wholly adapted to it as a spiritual society, and consists, 1. In direction; 2. In brotherly reproof when a fault has been committed; 3. In faithful but patient admonition when it is persisted in; and, 4. In exclusion from the table of the Lord, the visible sign of communion, but with no infliction of civil disabilities or penalties: nothing is more different in kind than this species of government from that exercised in a civil community, and which in its mildest form must accomplish its ends by the threat, or by the actual infliction, of fines, imprisonments, or corporal chastisements."

Thirdly: the *spirit* of its administration ought ever to be in harmony with "the gentleness of Christ." The Christian pastor must "exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." He may indeed reprove, admonish, "rebuke with all authority," and even *reject* an obstinate offender from the holy communion; and yet "the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."

Fourthly: the legitimate exercise of pastoral authority is necessarily subject to a twofold limitation; that is, in respect (1.) Of *the persons* to whom it extends, and (2.) Of *the rule* by which it must be regulated. The members of the church, and these alone, are properly under its scriptural control: "for what have we to do to judge them that are without?" And it must never be allowed to exceed the bounds prescribed to it by "the word of God," the only infallible rule of pastoral administration. We speak not now of powers purely *conventional*, or such as are founded upon mutual consent. And surely nothing can be plainer, than that a power professedly derived from the word of God must, in all its exercises, be regulated "by the same rule," and carefully restricted to "the same things."

Such, then, are the powers which scripturally pertain to the pastoral office. They are neither arbitrary nor despotic. The rule which they imply, is strictly spiritual, and always "in the Lord;" ever to be regulated by *his word*, exercised in *his fear*, and directed to *his glory* in the salvation of men; implying an authority to restrain what is vicious and hurtful in practice, but no power to coerce the judgment, or to infringe the rights of conscience:—a rule which, in every voluntary association or

organized society of Christians, must also be regulated by the established principles and laws of that community; for where these are manifestly at variance with the inspired canon, the proper use of Christian liberty, whether it respect minister or people, is, to *quit* or to *forbear* the communion.

SECTION III.

As the several different branches of church discipline are separately considered in the course of this Essay, we shall, in this place, make only the following general remarks:—

1. The constitution of Methodism places the administration of its entire discipline in the hands of the pastor. To him it pertains to regulate and conduct all its assemblies for divine worship; and to preside in all meetings for church business; to warn the unruly; to admonish such as walk disorderly; to admit to the communion, and to receive into the society; to censure publicly or in private; to suspend from church privileges, or to exclude from the society, as the nature of the case may require.*

* “The spiritual concerns (of the society) shall be managed by the preachers, who have *ever* appointed leaders, chosen stewards, and admitted members into and expelled them from the society, consulting their brethren the stewards and leaders. The preachers also, as hitherto, are to appoint love-feasts and watch-nights, and to vary the times and places of preaching, class-meeting, &c.” —*Anno 1794. Minutes*, vol. i., p. 299.

“No person shall be suffered, on any pretence, to partake of the Lord’s supper among us, unless he be a member of our society, or receive a note of admission from the superintendent, (or the

2. In Methodism, discipline is administered, not according to arbitrary will, but according to usages long established, or specific laws regularly enacted and publicly made known. As to its more important disciplinary laws, they are but the honest interpretations of Christ's direct and plain injunctions, modified in their application as changing circumstances have required; while its minor regulations are so framed as neither to violate nor to neutralize a divine precept.

3. Methodism is ever anxious, on the one hand, so

Preacher administering,) which note must be renewed quarterly."—*Anno* 1796, and *anno* 1805. *Minutes*, vol. i., p. 348; ii., p. 290.

"Let no Preacher suffer any thing to be done in the chapel where he officiates but what is according to the established usages of Methodism; knowing that he is accountable to God for whatever he does, or permits to be done, during the times he is in possession of the pulpit.

"Let no preacher, therefore, suffer his right to conduct every part of the worship of Almighty God to be infringed on, either by singers or others, but let him sacredly preserve and calmly maintain his authority; as he who sacrifices this, sacrifices not only Methodism but the spirit and design of Christianity."—*Anno* 1805. *Minutes*, vol. ii., p. 291.

"Where organs have been introduced, the Conference requires that they shall be considered as under the control of the superintendent, or of the officiating preacher for the time being, whose right and duty it is to conduct every part of the public worship of God."—*Anno* 1808. *Minutes*, vol. iii., p. 31.

"The Conference directs that every superintendent shall take care that the plans for the local and travelling preachers be made by himself or his colleagues; that no person be permitted to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper but a travelling preacher in full connexion; that the stewards be annually changed or re-elected in every circuit; and that the chapels which are not yet settled, be speedily settled on the Conference plan."—*Anno* 1811. *Minutes*, vol. iii., p. 223. *Vide* a "Nota Bene" in reference to this, *Minutes*, vol. iii., p. 295.

to guard the administration of its discipline as to prevent abuse; and, on the other, to afford such facilities of appeal as to insure redress in case of mal-administration.*

* For various and important provisions to this effect, *vide* Plan of Pacification; (*Minutes*, vol. i., pp. 322—326;) Regulations made at Leeds, *anno* 1797; (*Minutes*, vol. i., pp. 374—380;) and the Regulations of 1835. (*Minutes*, vol. vii., pp. 573—590.)

CHAPTER VI.

SO FAR AS THE ORDER OF SUCCESSION CAN BE TRACED IN THE INSPIRED RECORDS, THOSE WHO HAD THEMSELVES BEEN REGULARLY INDUCTED INTO THE MINISTRY, ORDAINED THEIR SUCCESSORS AND FELLOW-LABOURERS; BUT NOT WITHOUT FIRST BEING SATISFIED AS TO THE COMPETENCY OF THE INDIVIDUALS BY THEM OFFICIALLY ADMITTED INTO THE SACRED OFFICE.

SECTION I.

IN support of this principle, we are fully entitled to allege the practice of the apostles and their coadjutors: "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." (Acts xiv. 23.) This is obviously spoken of Paul and Barnabas. Indeed the context is but a simple narrative of what was done or acted by these two apostles, in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Antioch in Pisidia, Pamphylia, and Perga. Without the slightest variation of idiom in the inspired writer, the following particulars are successively affirmed of these illustrious missionaries: "And when *they* had taught many" in Derbe, "*they* returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch;" and "when *they* had ordained them elders in every church, *they* commended them to the Lord; and when *they* had preached the word in Perga, *they* went down into Attalia." It is therefore clear, even to a certainty, that the ordination or appointment of elders in the several churches was as properly the act of these two apostles, as was their preaching the Gospel in Derbe, and speaking the word in Perga.

The importance of this indubitable fact, and its decisive bearing upon the question now under consideration, will account for the anxiety with which the advocates for a popular appointment to the Christian ministry have always endeavoured, either to evade or to neutralize the force of the conclusion which it fairly yields. The learned Dr. Gill, a zealous writer of this party, on the words, "ordained them elders," says: "That is, gave orders or directions to every church, as to the choice of elders over them!" The flagrant licentiousness of such a gloss, must be regarded as utterly destructive of its claim to a serious refutation. In the following criticism upon the word *χειροτονεῖν*, *to ordain*, the doctor does but echo what has been urged by several of his learned predecessors. They ordained them elders, "that is, by taking the suffrages and votes of the members of the churches, shown by the stretching out of their hands, as the word signifies." It is hard to believe that such men as Calvin and Beza would ever have adopted an interpretation so strained and unsupported, had not necessity been laid upon them either to do this or to abandon a favourite theory.

That the word in question originally signifies to lift up or to stretch forth the hand, is allowed. But to this it is replied:—

(1.) Those who adopt this line of argument are obliged to admit, that this word is used by various writers in the sense of *to appoint* simply, without any reference at all to votes or suffrages. (2.) In the only other instance in which St. Luke employs this word, (Acts x. 41, where it occurs with the preposition *πρὸ*, *before*,) its meaning cannot be, to ordain by taking votes or suffrages; but must be simply, to ordain, appoint, or choose: "witnesses chosen before of God." Besides, (3.) as Campbell and others have showed, if the word must

have such a meaning in this place, the only *electors* were Paul and Barnabas; for, whatever the word may here signify, stretching forth, laying on, or lifting up of hands, it plainly describes *the act* of Paul and Barnabas alone.* So that, (4.) the etymology of the term does, in fact, much more strongly favour the interpretation of Dr. Hammond and others; namely, "to consecrate or ordain *by imposition of hands*." For the word $\chi\epsilon\iota\rho$. cannot, without huge violence to the construction, be made to signify the people's lifting up their hands, but must, if the idea is to be retained at all, denote the apostles' stretching out theirs. But, (5.) upon the whole, Dr. Hammond has clearly proved, by numerous instances, that, "in the ordinary usage of both Jewish and Christian writers," the word signifies "constituting or ordaining, without any intimation of suffrages, or plurality of persons or voices, by whom this ordination is made." Dr. Bloomfield also remarks upon this passage, "There is no point on which the learned have been more agreed for above a century than this, that $\chi\epsilon\iota\rho$. here simply denotes having *selected, constituted, appointed*." It is, therefore, indisputably plain, that the appointment of elders in the several churches referred to in the context was properly *the act* of Paul and Barnabas.†

* The verb $\chi\epsilon\iota\rho$. occurs but once more in the New Testament, 2 Cor. viii. 19; where it is found in construction with *the churches*, and properly denotes their act: "The brother who was chosen" (or appointed) "*by the churches* to travel with us," &c. And according to the grammatical construction of the two passages, the churches are not more clearly affirmed to appoint in one instance, than Paul and Barnabas are affirmed to appoint in the other.

† To the testimony of the above-named eminent biblical critics, we might add the no less respectable authority of several others. It is well known that, futile as the pretence for such a licence really is, Beza translates the word, in Acts xiv. 23, *per suffragia creassent*.

The same principle is clearly involved in the following directive precepts:—"And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. ii. 2.) That Timothy is here directed to appoint properly qualified persons to the office of the ministry, and that, consequently, he was invested with the power of ordination, is certain. But this is not all. By restricting the exercise of this power to the appointment of *faithful men* who should be *able to teach* others, the apostolic precept constitutes Timothy himself, not indeed the exclusive, but the ultimate, judge of ministerial fitness or qualification. That Titus also was invested with the like authority, admits of no dispute: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." (Titus i. 5.)

"We challenge any man," say the Provincial Assembly of London, *anno* 1654, "to show any one text in all the New Testament, for the justification of popular ordination. We read of ordination by apostles, Acts vi., xiv.; by prophets and teachers, Acts xiii.;

Upon which Macknight, with his accustomed critical acumen, remarks: "According to this translation, Paul and Barnabas ordained persons elders, whom the churches chose by their suffrages. But as the word *χειρ.* must be construed, not with *the churches*, but with Paul and Barnabas, if it be translated *per suffragia creassent*, it will imply, that the elders were made by the suffrages, not of the churches, but of Paul and Barnabas; which is absurd. The common translation of the passage is more just; for *χειροτονεῖν* signifies to nominate or *appoint* simply." (*Gen. Pref.*, sect. iv., note.) Campbell's censure of Beza's rashness and partiality is still more severe: "I cannot help declaring, that the words *per suffragia*, are a mere interpolation, for the sake of answering a particular purpose." (*Preliminary Dissertations*, diss. x., part i., sect. 7.) *Vide* also Hammond *in loco*.

by evangelists, Titus i., 1 Tim. v. 22; and by a presbytery, 1 Tim. iv.: but for ordination by the people, we read not of it at all." (*Jus Divinum Min. Evangel.*, part i., chap. xiii.) These things suggest the only true and proper explanation of a fact before adverted to, namely, that those divine precepts, injunctions, and directions which respect the selection, qualifications, trial, and appointment of candidates for the holy ministry, are found, not in epistles addressed to churches or societies of Christians, but in the inspired epistles to Timothy and Titus; one prominent design of which epistles obviously is, that each of these distinguished servants of Christ might be divinely guided in the selection of persons properly qualified to fill the sacred office.*

To what extent the churches were consulted, or in what particular manner they expressed concurrence or dissent, in the first age, we have no means of ascer-

* "The qualifications of those who were to be made bishops, and elders, and deacons, are mentioned, not in epistles to the churches, but in the epistles to Timothy and Titus; who are directed to the proper method of trying such as might be admitted to take part with them in overseeing the church of God. The judgment of the qualifications is vested in those who, having been themselves found qualified, may be supposed capable of trying others; their act, following upon their approbation, is the solemn investiture of those whom they have found worthy; and they are the instruments by which Jesus Christ conveys to that order of men which he meant to continue in his church till the end of the world, the authority implied in the exercise of their office." (*Dr. Hill's Lectures.*) "The epistles to Timothy and Titus, taken together, containing a full account of the qualifications and duties of the ministers of the Gospel, may be considered as a complete body of divinely inspired *ecclesiastical canons*, to be observed by the Christian clergy of all denominations to the end of the world." (*Macknight.*)

taining. That parties so deeply interested in the appointment of ministers should be either disregarded or overlooked, is not to be supposed. To this conclusion we are led, whether we consider, on the one hand, the nature of the thing, the well-known character of the apostles, their deep and affectionate solicitude to promote the peace and edification of the churches, and their willingness to please all men for good unto edification ; or, on the other, the impressive admonitions given to the churches, to "beware of false prophets," and to "try the spirits whether they be of God." Mr. Watson justly observes : "The mode in which the people shall be made a concurrent party, is matter of prudential regulation ; but they had an early, and certainly a reasonable, right to a voice in the appointment of their ministers, although the power of ordination was vested in ministers alone, to be exercised on their responsibility to Christ."

While, therefore, we assert the authority of the Christian pastorate in what we deem its scriptural extent, we must also strongly assert, that the scriptural powers of the ministry imply no right to act in an arbitrary manner, either in deciding upon the qualifications of a candidate, or in his appointment to the sacred office. As to the first of these particulars, THE RULE, according to which judgment must, in every case, be given, is properly DIVINE ; consisting of such inspired regulations as are clearly contained in holy Scripture. Arbitrarily to erect a standard which is not sanctioned by "the word of God," and by this to admit into, or exclude from, the office of the ministry, must be denounced as criminal usurpation ; a daring and direct invasion of the divine prerogative. With regard to the second particular, the churches have an undoubted right to be consulted in the appointment of their own

ministers. In addition to what has been stated above, this is but a fair deduction from the fact, that with whatever powers the Christian ministry may have been invested, those powers are given "for edification, and not for destruction." And if the Christian pastor "must have *a good report* of them which are without," certainly he must be such an one as the church itself can, on scriptural and reasonable grounds, "hold in reputation," and receive "as the minister of Christ." The churches have a manifest right to be satisfied that their pastors are *scripturally qualified* for the duties of the pastoral office: for instance, that they are men of "blameless" character and sincere piety; "faithful men; able also to teach; apt to teach; lovers of good men; sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word;" men who, with affection and fidelity, will "watch for *their* souls, as them that must give account." Such pastors, and such only, are the churches required to receive "as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." Such persons, and such only, can the Christian pastorate lawfully ordain. We say *lawfully* ordain; for should any congregation of professing Christians unhappily determine to select for their pastor, an individual manifestly destitute of any of these essential qualifications, it is plain that no conscientious minister of Christ could become a party to such an appointment.

Upon the general subject of this chapter, we hold the following conclusions to be clearly established:— (1.) That the apostles, elders, pastors, and teachers, of the first and purest age, were the recognised ultimate judges of ministerial qualification, and that *they* officially appointed or ordained their successors and fellow-labourers. (2.) That the rule of their administration was "the word of God;" and that the power with which

they were entrusted was ever exercised in the fear of God and for the glory of Christ; with a deeply affectionate concern for the edification of the churches, and in the benevolent spirit of the apostle's sentiment: "Not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." How truly may it be said, "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing!"

SECTION II.

IN the Wesleyan constitution, as we hope now to be able to evince, the different interests involved in this question are so consulted, as to secure the scriptural rights of the church, without infringing the scriptural authority of the pastoral office. Here it will be necessary to keep in view an important provision which has already been quoted from the "Deed of Declaration;" namely, that "the Conference shall and may admit into connexion with them, or upon trial, any person or persons *whom they shall approve*, to be preachers and expounders of God's holy word;" a provision which, as stated above, refers the question of ministerial fitness to the ultimate decision of the Conference. In connexion with this, however, must be taken the following law of 1797: "Before any superintendent propose a preacher to the Conference as proper to be admitted on trial, such preacher must be approved of at the March Quarterly Meeting." (*Minutes*, vol. i., p. 379.)

When a candidate is to be brought forward, the regular mode of proceeding is as follows. The superintendent, as the representative of the Conference, proposes the individual to the circuit Quarterly Meeting.

This meeting is composed of officers from every part of the circuit, in which also the candidate himself has generally laboured for several years, in the capacity of local and occasional preacher.* If this meeting *approve* of the superintendent's nomination, the candidate passes on to the regular course of examination; first, before the preachers stationed within a given district; and afterwards, before the annual Conference. If this meeting *disapprove*, the individual must drop. It must be observed that, in all cases, to *nominate* or propose the candidate rests *solely* with the superintendent; to *approve* or disapprove is with the Quarterly Meeting. Thus two classes of interests are at once secured; for it is not to be supposed, either that the superintendent will *propose* an individual of whose competency he is not satisfied, or that the Quarterly Meeting will *approve* of a candidate whom it believes to be unfit. Since, therefore, every candidate for the Wesleyan ministry must pass this ordeal, the people clearly have a powerful voice in the election of their own ministers.

The voice of the people amounts, in fact, to an absolute *veto* upon the nomination of the Conference, in the first instance. Thus they are effectually secured against injurious obtrusions. Such being the case, it is not only

* "In order more effectually to guard against the introduction of improper persons into the ministry among us, it is agreed that when any offer themselves for our itinerancy who have not resided two years at the least in the circuits from which they are recommended, very particular and strict inquiries as to their characters and qualifications shall be addressed by the preacher who intends to propose them to the District-Meeting, to the superintendents of those circuits from which they have recently removed, and in which it is presumed they are best known; and the result of such inquiries shall be communicated to the meeting."—*Anno 1827. Minutes*, vol. vi., p. 280.

in strict accordance with the word of God, but perfectly reasonable in itself, that the power of *final adjudication* should remain with the Conference, as the associate pastorate of the Connexion at large. In churches or congregations strictly independent, provided the people by whom he is elected are satisfied with their minister, it is enough. In an extensive union of churches, the case is essentially different. In the Wesleyan Connexion, for instance, where a minister must be successively appointed to the charge of several different congregations, the question of ministerial fitness or unfitness must be determined upon broader principles. Connexional justice demands the strongest possible guarantee, that no man shall be admitted into the pastorate whose ministry will not be generally acceptable to "all the churches." Besides, here a minister is not only the pastor of the people, he is likewise the associate of an united ministry; among whom he is constitutionally entitled to rank as "a fellow" and "an equal." Now the fact is too obvious to need pointing out, that, to such a body as the Methodist Conference, *ministerial character* is a matter of infinite importance. Since, therefore, the character of the body may be compromised and seriously injured, either by the moral delinquency or ministerial incapacity of any one of its members, that body has a manifest right to adjudicate upon the fitness or unfitness of every candidate for its communion; and any attempt to force upon the Conference men of whom it is constrained to stand in doubt, would be a flagrant moral wrong.

ORDINATION.—The solemn, formal admission of candidates to the full exercise of the Christian ministry, has from the beginning varied in different places; and no considerate person will now affirm, that holy Scripture explicitly enjoins any one particular form as indispensable, or as exclusively proper. The Wesleyan mode is

simple, but it is scriptural, impressive, solemn. After a due course of probation, and an extensive series of examinations both private and public, the approved candidates are publicly received by the Conference as fellow-labourers in its united ministry, and formally recognised by the assembled church as duly appointed to the pastoral office. That the truly primitive practice of imposition of hands, though by no means essential to a valid ordination, should have been so long dispensed with by the body, is a singularity in Methodism for which we know of no sufficient reason. Thus, however, the matter stood until the Conference of 1836, when the following minute was very properly adopted:—

“Q. XXIV. What is the decision of the Conference on the ORDINATION OF OUR MINISTERS BY IMPOSITION OF HANDS?”

“A. The Conference, after mature deliberation, resolves, that the preachers who are this year to be publicly admitted into full connexion, shall be ordained by imposition of hands; that this shall be our standing rule and usage in future years; and that any rule of a contrary nature which may be in existence, shall be, and is hereby, rescinded.”*

THE STATIONING OF PREACHERS.—In this place it will be proper briefly to notice the *annual appointment* of preachers to the several circuits. The Methodist chapels are settled upon trust, that the trustees thereof respectively “do and shall permit and suffer such person and persons as shall be appointed at the yearly Conference of the people called Methodists, and no others, to have the use and occupation of the said chapel, for the purpose of preaching and expounding God’s holy word,

* For a full and ample refutation of the arrogant and papistical claims of modern apostolical successionists, and for everything relating to the validity of *non-episcopal* ordination, *vide* Powell’s “Essay on Apostolical Succession.” See also chap. xii. of this Essay.

and for the performing of all other acts of religious worship therein, without any suit or interruption whatsoever, of or by the said trustees for the time being." The Plan of Pacification also expressly provides, that "the appointment of the preachers shall remain *solely* with the Conference." The same document provides, however, that—

"If the majority of the trustees, or the majority of the stewards and leaders, of any society, believe that any preacher appointed for their circuit is immoral, erroneous in doctrine, deficient in abilities, or that he has broken any of the rules above-mentioned, they shall have authority to summon the preachers of the district, and all the trustees, stewards, and leaders of the circuit, to meet in their chapel, on a day and hour appointed (sufficient time being given). And if the majority of the meeting judge, that the accused preacher is immoral, erroneous in doctrine, deficient in abilities, &c., he shall be considered as removed from that circuit: and the District Committee shall, as soon as possible, appoint another preacher for that circuit, instead of the preacher so removed."

That such a power should be vested in the trustees, stewards, and leaders, is highly important, both in its bearing upon the moral character of our ministry, and as a stimulus to ministerial fidelity. But that the annual appointment of the preachers should be fully vested in the Conference, subject to no merely arbitrary interference, was deemed by Mr. Wesley,* and really is, a matter of vital importance to the stability of the Connexion, and the spiritual welfare of its societies. However, by the good providence of God, these matters are, happily, now so adjusted as to afford ample security to all parties. The trustees are really protected; and yet the appointment of the preachers

* Vide *Wesley's Works*, vol. xii., pp. 136—138; and vol. xiii., pp. 241—244.

remains "*solely* with the Conference." At the same time, the societies are not only protected, but have all the indulgence that the nature of the case will admit. Circuits are at liberty to invite, through the medium of their Quarterly Meetings, such ministers, from year to year, as they may deem most eligible; and to petition the Conference for their appointment. And although such requests cannot always be granted, the Conference is ever ready to meet them as far as possible; only it is properly judged that, in the appointment of preachers, as in everything else, the measures of the Conference (composed, as that body is, of the spiritual fathers of the Connexion at large) should ever be founded upon comprehensive views of what is due to the rights, interests, and feelings of *all classes* of our officers and people, and to the welfare of the whole family of Methodism.

CHAPTER VII.

WHO IS THE PASTOR? AND WHAT ARE THE DUTIES
PROPER TO HIM?

SECTION I.

THESE questions are to be answered by a reference to what has gone before. The pastoral office was instituted by divine authority; and the word of God has fully ascertained its qualifications, duties, powers, and responsibilities. In the scripture sense, therefore, he, and he alone, is the pastor, who is called of God, separated from merely secular pursuits, and solemnly set apart for the whole work of this ministry.

In every prosperous and truly Christian church there are "diversities of gifts;" and it is the revealed will of God that all these gifts should be both diligently improved and beneficially exercised, in peaceful harmony with, and in due subordination to, one another. The ruling head, the discerning eye, the ready hand, and the laborious foot, each has its proper sphere of usefulness, and its degree of honour. And thus "hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you."

Now the pastoral office, as defined in holy Scripture, plainly involves the whole care and oversight of the entire flock. Hence the position of the minister differs essentially from that of every other member of the church, whether private or official. By the appoint-

ment of God, he has the charge of "ALL THE FLOCK" with which he stands officially connected; and must be the pastor of every member of that "church of God" to which he is appointed "overseer." In a word, he is "the minister of Christ, and steward of the mysteries of God;" and therefore, in the purely spiritual functions of his office, he ministers to ALL, himself being ministered unto by NONE.

Some duties the pastor has in common with his fellow-Christians; some are peculiar to himself, that is, they are strictly official; and, on the principle that the greater always includes the less, the duties and responsibilities of several minor offices are all virtually included in his. As duties proper and peculiar to the pastoral office, we may enumerate,

FIRST, THE REGULAR AND STATED MINISTRY OF THE WORD.—This is the Christian minister's grand and primary function; because it is, in the economy of God, the grand and primary instrument of man's conversion and salvation. This is the mighty engine of his strength; the all-important and sublime department in which his highest powers and noblest energies ought ever to be exerted to the uttermost; and to which every thing else, however excellent or however necessary, ought to be subservient and auxiliary.* "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it

* It is recorded of the justly celebrated Robinson, of Leicester, that he would say in reference to this:—"It is well to visit; it is well to show kindness; to make friendly; to instruct at home; to instruct at their own houses; to educate the children; to clothe the naked. But THE PULPIT is the seat of usefulness; souls are to be converted and built up THERE; no exertion must be allowed which may have the effect of materially deteriorating this; whatever else is done should be with the design and hope of making this more effective."—*Vaughan*.

pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Cor. i. 21—25.) "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee.—Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. iv. 13—16.) "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. ii. 15.) "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; **PREACH THE WORD**; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." (2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.) With such intensity and vigour of application ought the Christian evangelist to prosecute his public ministry; while *that* must ever be sacredly directed to its one and glorious end,—the spiritual awakening, conversion, and eternal salvation of a dying world.*

SECONDLY, THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE HOLY SACRAMENTS, BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER.—The office of baptizing in the name of the adorable Trinity was solemnly committed by Christ himself into the hands of the apostles; to whom, at the same time, he gave commandment to "go into all the world and *preach the Gospel*;" a command which necessarily implied that, renouncing all merely secular pursuits, they should devote their lives to "the ministry of the

* To instruct and admonish *privately*, or to preach *occasionally*, may be common to others; but the regular exercise of this ministry is the pastor's *peculiar*.

word." Thus the authority to baptize was originally connected with the command to preach; whilst the act of baptizing is so clearly identified with the regular administration of the word, as to demonstrate that these are properly two distinct functions of one and the same office. From the very nature of his office, it necessarily results, that upon the pastor it must also devolve to administer the ordinance of the Lord's supper. On him it is emphatically enjoined "TO FEED the church of God." This he must do, not only with "the sincere milk of the word," rightly dividing, and carefully distributing the word of life, according to "the necessities of saints;" but also by a proper and solemn administration of those divine mysteries in reference to which, as well as to the atoning sacrifice, it is said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." At the *institution* of this holy sacrament, the Lord himself was present; and on that memorable occasion the Lord himself officiated. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed," (*or gave thanks*, no doubt with solemn prayer,) "and brake, and gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." (Matt. xxvi. 26.) From 1 Cor. x. 16, it is sufficiently evident that the practice of the apostles was a faithful copy of this affecting and adorable example. Indeed, since these two sacraments are properly *federal rites*, and pre-eminently Christ's ordinances, both Christian propriety and the entire spirit and letter of the Christian economy require, that they should be administered with all possible solemnity by "the ministers of Christ."

THIRDLY, ADMISSION INTO, AND EXPULSION FROM, THE

COMMUNION OF THE CHURCH.—That these are properly *pastoral acts*, follows of necessity from the two preceding observations. According to the original institute, baptism is the door of admission into the church, considered as one in Christ; and the sacrament of the Lord's supper is the standing and visible sign of Christian communion. It follows, that to whomsoever is intrusted the administration of these sacraments, to him also is hereby confided the keys of that communion. The justice of this conclusion is so palpable, that, whilst most Christian churches have fully recognised this branch of pastoral authority in its scriptural extent, those churches by which the authority of the pastor is usurped, attempt to save appearances by the following *salvo* :—The pastor is allowed, or rather required, to admit and expel *ministerially*, that is, in obedience to the church, and by its authority. On this point, Dr. Gill expresses himself thus : “Though the power of admission and rejection of members is originally in the church, it is executively in pastors *in the name* of the church.” (*Divinity*, vol. ii., p. 275.)* Whereas the plain and obvious sense of Scripture is, that this power is, by Christ's institution, inherent in the pastoral office; and to be exercised

* This is a real absurdity, and a direct contradiction to the most evident facts of the case. The first preachers of Christianity derived no such power from the churches, but all from Christ, by whom they were commissioned to found and constitute Christian societies; and to admit into or reject from them, according to his own inspired directions. In fact, they were fully invested with all these powers before any church existed or could exist. And wherever Christianity has yet been established, it was the exercise of these powers which called the churches themselves into existence. How an authority which of necessity must exist, and which, in fact, certainly did exist, *before* the churches, can be “*originally in the church*,” and thence delegated to its pastors, has yet to be explained.

according to the word of God, “*in the name of the Lord Jesus.*” For it must still be borne in mind that, besides defining a case in which the pastor is required officially to *reject*, the Scriptures clearly make him, and him alone, directly responsible for the external purity of the church to which he ministers, and censure him alike for suffering false teachers to seduce his flock, and for allowing disorderly and vicious persons to remain in his communion. (Rev. ii. 12—20.) But, certainly, this is a responsibility which can attach to the pastor only on the supposition that he has, at least, *a veto* on the admission of candidates, and authority to purge the society by the expulsion of injurious or unworthy members. This, therefore, is an authority which the conscientious pastor can neither innocently give up, divide with another, nor suffer to be wrested out of his hand.*

The churches certainly have “a right to such regulations and checks as shall secure, in the best possible way, the just and faithful exercise of the pastoral office, and the honest and impartial use of its powers; but this is the limit of their right; and every system of suffrages, or popular concurrence, which, under pretence

* “It is clear that, even in an independent church, if the office of the minister is not usurped, and, so to speak, put into a commission, of which the minister is but the nominal head, there may be cases of which the ultimate decision must rest with him. Should a church *factionously* refuse to admit into its communion persons brought to God under his ministry, and on whom he enjoins the scriptural obligation of Christian communion; or should it resist the expulsion of persons notoriously wicked, and proved to be so on unquestionable evidence, from laxity of moral feeling in the majority of the members, or from the same factious spirit; the rightful scriptural exercise of his ministry is arrested; and either he must compel obedience by the force of his authority, or, if a man of conscience, must abandon so rebellious a flock, and seek one of a more Christian character.”—*Watson's Works*, vol. vii., p. 95.

of guarding against abuse of ministerial authority, makes its exercise *absolutely* and *in all cases* dependent upon the consent of those over whom it extends, goes beyond this limit, and invades the right of pastoral government which the New Testament has established. It brings, in a word, the laws of Christ into debate, which yet the members profess to have received as their rule; and it claims to put into commission those duties which pastors are charged by Christ personally to discharge." (*Watson's Institutes*, vol. iii., p. 365.)

SECTION II.

IN conformity with the scriptural rule, and in accordance with the practice of other churches, Methodism regards as its pastors those only who are regularly and exclusively devoted to the work of its ministry. For the extension of Christ's kingdom in the earth, Methodism most effectively employs "diversities of gifts." Besides its regular ministry, it has its local and occasional preachers and exhorters, its leaders of classes, and its conductors of meetings for prayer. Nor does it either disparage or lightly esteem these valuable auxiliaries; but esteems them highly in love for their work's sake. The rule of its conduct is, "Honour all men," but "every man in his own order." For the pastoral office, as "the ordinance of God," it claims a just and scriptural pre-eminence; but its entire economy is so arranged, that any man, endowed with suitable gifts, and "called of God," may rise from the lowest to even the highest offices in the church.

The above distinction obtains, not only between the regular ministry and its subordinate auxiliaries, but likewise between such travelling preachers as are "in

full connexion" and such as are merely "on trial." Respecting the latter it must be observed, (1.) That though they give themselves entirely to the ministry of the word, they are not authorized to administer the sacraments; but, in this respect, resemble deacons in the church of England, and licensed preachers in the church of Scotland. (2.) That they cannot, even at the end of four years, the ordinary term of probation, claim as a matter of course to be fully received into the ministry; but are *really* in a state of probation, or on trial.

"Taking on trial is entirely different from admitting a preacher. One on trial may be either admitted or rejected, without doing him any wrong. Otherwise it would be no trial at all. Let every assistant explain this to them that are on trial."—*Large Minutes*, p. 36.

"Q. XVI. Have all the branches of our discipline been properly executed?

"A. We fear not; and therefore the Conference directs, that no person be permitted to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, but a travelling preacher in full connexion."—*Anno 1811. Minutes*, vol. iii., p. 223.

"Q. XXV. What is the judgment of the Conference as to the propriety of affording, in certain instances, some additional facilities for the administration of the ordinance of baptism?"

"A. Those of our preachers *on trial*, who shall be deemed proper to be appointed for this purpose by their respective superintendents, shall be allowed to administer the holy sacrament of baptism. But this permission shall extend only to *private* administration, in cases where children cannot be brought to the house of God, and where there are circumstances of great emergency, which will not allow the administration to be conveniently delayed."—*Anno 1829. Minutes*, vol. vi., p. 513.*

The Wesleyan constitution leaves the power of *admission* and *expulsion* where the word of God has obviously

* See Note (A.) at the end of this chapter.

placed it; that is, in the hands of the pastor. In these important and delicate functions, however, Methodism binds its ministers to a strict observance of well-defined and scriptural rules; for the righteous and impartial administration of which it holds them rigorously amenable. With respect to admission into the society, the law is,

"1. Give tickets to none till they are recommended by a leader, with whom they have met at least two months on trial. 2. Give notes (admitting persons on trial) to none but those who are recommended by one you know, or till they have met three or four times in a class. 3. Give them the rules the first time they meet."—*Anno* 1796. Found also in the Minutes of 1744. *Minutes*, vol. i., pp. 12, 349.

"The Leaders' Meeting shall have a right to declare any person on trial improper to be received into the society; and, after such declaration, the superintendent shall not admit such person into the society."—*Anno* 1797. *Minutes*, vol. i., p. 375.*

Equally guarded and explicit is the law of Methodism with regard to expulsion from its societies.

"1. The far greater number of those that are separated from us, exclude themselves by neglecting to meet in class, and use the other means of grace, and so gradually forsake us. With regard to others, 2. Our rule is fixed, and our custom expressed in the preceding Rules of Society; where it is said, 'If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, we will admonish him of the error of his ways; we will bear with him for a season; but then, if he

* Nothing can be plainer than that a preacher is warranted, by law and ancient usage, to admit into society any person of whose fitness he is satisfied, *provided only* that such person is "recommended by a leader with whom he has met two months on trial." The practice, therefore, which has obtained in a few circuits, of proposing members at a Leaders'-Meeting, is a mischievous and unauthorized innovation, which ought not to be tolerated in Methodism.

repent not, he hath no more place among us.* 3. No person must be expelled from the society for any breach of our rules, nor even for manifest immorality, till such fact or crime has been proved at a Leaders'-Meeting."†

* We quote this as published by authority in the Class-book. It is not *precisely* the language of any one particular minute. The *first* sentence merely states an obvious fact; for the *second*, *vide* "Rules of the Society of the People called Methodists," last paragraph.

† For the full and authorized exposition of the law in this case, *vide* Minutes of 1835; from which we quote the following:—"The case to which this rule of 1797 applies, must necessarily be understood as being that of a member who *demand*s a trial at the Leaders'-Meeting.—If a majority of the leaders, who vote at the meeting, shall be 'satisfied' that sufficient proof is adduced, to establish the fact of a wilful and habitual negligence, or of the violation of some scriptural or Methodistical rule, and shall give a verdict to that effect, then the Leaders'-Meeting has discharged *its whole part* of the painful duty to be performed, and the case is left in the hands of the superintendent. On *him* devolves, in his pastoral character, as the person whose peculiar call and province it is to 'watch over that soul' as one that 'must give an account,' the sole right and duty of deciding on the measures to be adopted towards the offender, in consequence of the verdict thus pronounced. The power of determining the sentence to be passed on an offender, thus uniformly and from the beginning, reserved to our superintendents, the Conference believe to be essential to the scriptural duties and functions of the pastoral office. Those duties and functions they can on no account consent to abandon, or permit to be frittered away; for that would seriously endanger the purity and peace of our Connexion, on the one hand, and the rights, liberties, and spiritual privileges of our people, on the other hand. The pastoral duty and power vested in the Christian ministry, to exclude obstinate offenders from our religious fellowship, for manifest violations of the general laws of the holy Scriptures, or of the particular rules of our Connexion, are clearly essential to peace and purity. The correlative power of the pastor, who, if a man of God, 'naturally cares' for the flock, to decide, after the case has been proved, on the adoption either of some mild and corrective sentence, or of the severer one of expulsion, according to his own deliberate and con-

Several "*additional guards and securities* to our people, for the *proper exercise* of the powers confided to superintendents in cases of expulsion," are to be found in the Minutes of 1835. Indeed, when we take into account the right, in every case, *to demand a trial* at the Leaders'-Meeting; the injunction upon superintendents, even after trial and conviction, *to defer* the sentence so as "to afford time for full inquiry into the past character of the party, and other circumstances, and for calm and careful deliberation;" the direction to each "not to proceed to the actual sentence of expulsion without privately asking information from such individual leaders and other judicious and experienced members of the society as are most likely to put him into full possession of all the circumstances necessary to his forming, with due discretion and caution, his own final judgment on the subject;" and also, in every case of proposed expulsion, to bring the matter "before the weekly meeting of the preachers in his circuit, in order that he may have the advantage of hearing the opinions and advices of his colleagues and co-pastors, before he shall finally decide on the course he ought to adopt;"—and when to all this we add, *the right* of an accused party of appeal, (1.) To a committee of five pastors, including the chairman of the district, *two* preachers selected by the party complaining, and *two* by the superintendent whose conduct is the subject of complaint; (2.) To the Annual District-Meeting; and (3.) To the Annual Conference;—we may truly affirm, not only that "the members of our societies are delivered from

scientious views of the whole affair, and all its circumstances, is equally essential to the *protection* of an accused individual from the effects of personal prejudice or irritation, or of popular excitement and undue local influence,"—*Minutes*, vol. vii., pp. 578—580.

every apprehension of clandestine expulsions," but also, that it scarcely lies within the power of human contrivance to provide a more substantial and complete security against any possible abuse of pastoral authority than what is actually provided by the Wesleyan constitution, without essentially impairing that authority itself. (*Minutes*, vol. vii., p. 581.)

NOTE (A), p. 71.

To serve a purpose, it has been alleged, that the preachers are prohibited by Mr. Wesley himself from administering the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper; and that their conduct in this respect is a flagrant departure from Mr. Wesley's principles. Even in the present day, this allegation is not unfrequently urged by a certain description of clergymen, both from the pulpit and the press. It is the subject of a disreputable tract, now being pushed into extensive circulation among our people; and it forms one article in the "responsive plea" recently tendered to the Court of Arches, on behalf of the vicar of Gedney.

The allegation is founded upon a passage contained in Mr. Wesley's sermon on Heb. v. 4, which we subjoin:—

"I wish all you who are vulgarly termed Methodists would seriously consider what has been said. And particularly you whom God hath commissioned to call sinners to repentance. It does by no means follow from hence, that ye are commissioned to baptize, or to administer the Lord's supper. Ye never dreamed of this, for ten or twenty years after ye began to preach. Ye did not then, like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, 'seek the priesthood also.' Ye knew, 'no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.' O contain yourselves within your own bounds," &c. (*Works*, vol. vii., p. 279.) Upon this subject we remark:—

FIRST, The sermon from which the above is quoted, forms no part of that theological or ecclesiastical *system*, to the maintenance of which Mr. Wesley bound his successors; that is, it is not included in those volumes which Mr. Wesley himself has constituted the only standard of the Connexion. Hence we have a right to assume, that Mr. Wesley *did not* intend to make these sentiments *the law of the Connexion after his decease*.

SECONDLY, Even at the time he thus spake, there were among the preachers some to whom Mr. Wesley himself had given authority "to administer the holy sacraments," as well

as "to preach the word of God;" a fact which goes far to demonstrate, that Mr. Wesley did not intend *absolutely* to prohibit the preachers from administering the sacraments; but rather to confine the administration to such of them as might be duly authorized to administer.

THIRDLY, It was Mr. Wesley's firm and openly declared belief, "that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain." (*Works*, vol. xiii., p. 218.) He declared, moreover, "I firmly believe I am a scriptural *ἐπίσκοπος*, (bishop,) as much as any man in England or in Europe. For the *uninterrupted succession*," (that idol of the popish party within the Establishment) I "know to be a *fable*." (*Ibid.*, p. 220.) Now it is quite impossible that Mr. Wesley should not be aware that, upon his own principles, those preachers whom he had ordained possessed the scriptural power of ordination as fully and perfectly as either himself or "any man in England or in Europe." And when it is considered, on the one hand, that Mr. Wesley deliberately conferred upon some of the preachers what himself had taught them to regard as a scriptural power, not only to administer the sacraments, but also of ordaining to the full exercise of the pastoral office; and, on the other, that he opposed no legal barrier to the fullest exercise of this power; what can an unprejudiced mind infer, but that Mr. Wesley already felt the impossibility of carrying out in Methodism, the ultra sentiments of the above quotation, and foresaw that state of things to be *unavoidable* which has since actually taken place? In fact, Mr. Wesley had already seen enough to convince him that, whatever might be his *wish* upon the subject, neither himself, had he lived, nor the Conference, after his decease, could much longer deny the administration of the sacraments to the societies by their own preachers, and, at the same time, preserve the Connexion from ruin. Mr. Wesley's longer life might have *delayed*, but most certainly could not have *prevented*, the salutary change.

Here the matter might be left; but, from the importance attached to it, we are induced to view it a little more at large. Upon Methodism Mr. Wesley ever looked as upon a great and special work of God; to extend and to perpetuate which,

was the primary object of his laborious and devoted life. So far as this could be done without separation, he determined not to separate from the church. But when called upon to choose between separation from the church and an abandonment of this holy enterprise, or even of the means which he regarded as essential to the attainment of these holy objects, he certainly preferred the former to the latter part of this alternative. Thus: "Were we pushed on this side; were there no alternative allowed, we should judge it our bounden duty rather wholly to separate from the church, than to give up any one of these points." (*Works*, vol. xiii., p. 165.) Thus Mr. Wesley wrote *anno* 1755; and the whole of his subsequent proceedings were in harmony with this fundamental principle. He neither deviated without an urgent necessity, nor refused to deviate when he believed the vital interests of the Connexion to require it. With a moderation and a fidelity highly creditable to itself, but which some clamorous opponents cannot appreciate, and will not imitate, the Conference has thus far copied the example of its venerable founder. That the separation is so wide as it is, must be attributed chiefly to the clergy themselves; that it is not immeasurably wider, can be attributed only to the firmness, tact, and moderation of the Conference.

With regard to the position of his societies, and their future relation to the church, Mr. Wesley's early conviction is thus expressed: "We believe, either that they will be *thrust out*, or that they will *leaven the whole church*." (*Anno* 1744. *Minutes*, vol. i., p. 9.) Forty years subsequent to this date, it could no longer be doubtful which of these events was to be realized in the history of Methodism. "The spirit which had refused Mr. Wesley permission to preach in the churches, had driven him into the fields and lanes, and there excited mobs to annoy him, in many places manifested the same hostility to his people, who were frequently made the objects of attack and bitter censure when they appeared at church, whether to unite in public worship or to receive the Lord's supper. Nor can it be denied, that too many of the clergy who thus treated them were openly immoral in their lives." (*The Church and the Methodists*, by the Rev. T. Jackson, p. 32.) In fact, so

far as the Wesleyans can be justly charged with separation, Mr. Wesley's sagacity could not but perceive that separation had, through this unchristian hostility, already become inevitable. Accordingly, (*anno* 1788,) Mr. Wesley remarks that "most of the clergy," so far from wishing the Methodists to continue *in the church*, "use all the means in their power, fair and unfair, to drive them out of it." (*Works*, vol. xiii., p. 233.)

Hence, while the founder of Methodism laboured to the last to preserve his societies in as close a union as possible with the church, he wisely provided for the coming emergency. He deliberately conferred upon the Connexion what he believed to be a full and scriptural ordination to the pastoral office : and thus enabled it to maintain its ground in that new and independent position, into which the spirit of the clergy and the course of events were so visibly impelling it.

In confirmation of this view of the question, we refer,—

1. To the Minutes of 1794, in which it is stated, as a notorious fact, that "BAPTISM, as well as the burial of the dead, was performed by many of the preachers *long before the death of Mr. Wesley, AND WITH HIS CONSENT.*" (Vol. i., p. 299.)

2. To Myles's "Chronological History of Methodism." Under date of 1788, the historian writes : "Mr. Wesley had hitherto ordained ministers only for America and Scotland ; but from this period, being assisted by the Rev. James Creighton and the Rev. Peard Dickinson, presbyters of the church of England, he set apart for the sacred office, by the imposition of his hands and prayer, Messrs. A. Mather, T. Rankin, and H. Moore, without sending them out of England ; strongly advising them at the same time, that, according to his example, they should continue united to the established church, *so far as the blessed work in which they were engaged would permit.*" (P. 175.)

3. The following important testimonies we quote from a series of valuable papers on "Methodism in its Relations to the Church and the Nation," by H. Sandwith, Esq. They are from two pamphlets published in 1795. Mr. John Murlin says, "Above thirty years ago, Mr. Wesley sent me to the city of Norwich to a congregation who desired the sacrament ; and I both baptized their children and administered the

sacrament to the people part of three years; and the preachers who followed me did the same. So there has been nothing done by the preachers since Mr. Wesley's death, but what had been done in his lifetime." The writer of the second pamphlet observes respecting Mr. Wesley, "His ordaining Messrs. Mather and Rankin to be bishops in England, and several preachers to be presbyters, some time before his demise, was another alteration of his plan. Before his death, a great number of places had service in church hours, and several of them the sacrament of the Lord's supper regularly administered in them. His ordaining Mr. Woodhouse, of Ouston, near Epworth, and appointing him to preach in his gown and bands, in church hours, and also to administer the sacrament, although he was only a local preacher, was a further proof of his liberality. For some time before his death, he suffered Mr. Hanby to administer the ordinances in the circuits where he laboured. What he published to the world, and what he declared to his friends, in justification of his conduct, sufficiently prove that, however some zealous advocates of the church might clamour, he was resolved to act continually *as the openings of Providence should direct.*" (See *Wes. Meth. Mag.* for 1829, p. 603.)

4. We add the following quotation from Mr. Bradburn's pamphlet, entitled "The Question," &c., published *anno* 1792, not only because it corroborates the foregoing testimonies, but on account of the obvious correctness of its concluding remark:—"The sacraments were administered by several of the ordained preachers before Mr. Wesley's death; that of baptism, in various places, without any ordination at all. Mr. Wesley knew this. Nay, Mr. Wesley himself took Mr. Myles, who never was ordained, within the rails, at Dublin, to assist him in giving the Lord's supper. Mr. Wesley *designed* the Lord's supper to be administered by the ordained preachers; or why did he, at their ordination, ask them, 'Will you then give your faithful diligence always so to minister the doctrine and SACRAMENTS, as the Lord hath commanded?' And why else did he deliver the Bible into their hands, saying these words, 'Take thou authority to preach the word of God, and to administer the holy SACRAMENTS in the congregation?' You

may say, 'This was for Scotland or America.' I say, it was no such thing. Messrs. Mather, Moore, &c., were not ordained for either Scotland or America, any more than I was. Therefore, the people who desire it, having the Lord's supper from the preachers whom the Conference may authorize to administer it, is no breach of the plan left by Mr. Wesley, nor the smallest infringement on the engagement of the Conference;" namely, "to follow strictly the plan which Mr. Wesley left at his death." (Pp. 26, 27.)

Upon the whole, the following important conclusions are fully established by Mr. Sandwith, in the admirable papers above referred to:—“(1.) The Conference did not give to Methodism all the functions of a Christian church. Mr. Wesley did that by the measures he adopted for America and Scotland. (2.) Neither did they assume for the preachers in England the right of exercising a Christian pastorate. That also was conferred by Mr. Wesley, and its occasional exercise allowed by him. The *principle* originated with him, when Lord King's book convinced him of the equality of bishops and presbyters: the *expediency* of its further application was that alone with which they had to do. And independently of the apology for their further deviation from ancient usage in the schism which was prevented, they were justified by the fact, that an unconquerable conscientious scruple against receiving the Lord's supper from unenlightened and irreligious clergymen had caused that all-important ordinance to be extensively neglected. (3.) Neither did they betray an intemperate haste in exercising the plenary powers with which Mr. Wesley had invested them. Their departure from original practices was by gradually yielding to an overwhelming necessity. (4.) Their whole conduct, in reference to the sacraments, indicates the conscientious solicitude of men anxious to obtain the approval of God, as much as that of their fellow-Christians. And, (5.) They adhered, as Mr. Wesley did, and as it is the glory of Methodism invariably to do, to a steady preference of *essentials* to *non-essentials*; thereby keeping in view the end of their vocation, the salvation of souls.” (*Wes. Meth. Mag.* for 1829, pp. 667, 668.)

Enough has now been said in reply to those who falsely

accuse us of having departed from Mr. Wesley's *principles*, on the subject of the sacraments. Another subject is broached in the tract referred to at the commencement of this note; namely, *service in church hours*. On this subject, the tract contains the following sentences:—"He (Mr. Wesley) always went to church himself, urged his preachers to do so, *and never allowed his meetings to be held in church hours*. How far many have departed from this rule, every place where a Methodist meeting-house is erected, will bear sad and melancholy witness." Our remarks refer particularly to the words printed in italics. The astounding falsehood of *that* assertion must be plain from what has gone before; but we have farther proof of its entire flagitiousness.

Every man who is but tolerably conversant with the facts of the case must know, that instances are not wanting in which Mr. Wesley himself had service in church hours; nor were persons then wanting to cry out, "This is leaving the church, which Mr. Wesley has continually declared he would never do." And how did Mr. Wesley answer these accusers? Why thus: "And I declare so still. But I appeal to all the world, I appeal to common sense, I appeal to the 'Observer' himself, could I mean hereby, 'I will not have service in church hours,' when I was doing it all the time? Could I, even then, (between forty and fifty years before,) deny that I had service in church hours? No; *but I denied, and do deny still, that this is leaving the church,*" &c. (*Works*, vol. xiii., p. 237.)

Again, in the year 1786, Mr. Wesley thus writes: "In what cases do we allow of service in church hours? I answer,—

"1. When the minister is a notoriously wicked man.

"2. When he preaches Arian, or any equally pernicious doctrine.

"3. When there are not churches in the town sufficient to contain half the people. And,

"4. When there is no church at all within two or three miles."—*Minutes*, vol. i., p. 191.

Query. If Mr. Wesley could have foreseen the Romish apostacy which is now spreading within the pale of the Establishment, would he not have added,

5. When the clergyman openly repudiates the Reformers, and condemns the doctrines of the Reformation? And,

6. When the pure and simple order of the *reformed* worship, is defaced and *deformed* by the ridiculous and disgusting symbols of Popery?

However, what Mr. Welsey has written on this subject is sufficiently plain and to the point. And yet there are men who, in order to fix the sin of schism upon the Methodists, that is, to serve the purposes of bigotry and intolerance, dare to affirm that "Mr. Wesley *never allowed his meetings to be held in church hours!*" Yea, and there are respectable churchmen, and even clergymen, who have (perhaps unwittingly) lent themselves to the circulation of that false and utterly contemptible production which contains the above assertion, and *others equally veracious!* Is it possible that the church can need the service of such writers as the above? Or can she possibly be benefited by the advocacy of men so shamefully ignorant, or so utterly truthless?

As some gentlemen are become so enamoured of Mr. Wesley's sentiments on the subject of separation, we are tempted to add another remark. Observe, *the correctness of Mr. Wesley's views* is not now in question: *on this point*, the anonymous writer of the *tract* appears to be entirely satisfied. The substance of *his* charge against the Methodists is, that they have wickedly departed from Mr. Wesley's principles. But to what purpose, then, does *he* allege it against us as a grievous crime, that the Methodist chapels are open in church hours? Is he so ignorant as not to know that, to all such charges, Mr. Wesley has furnished us with the triumphant answer, "I denied, *and do deny still*, that this is leaving the church?" Really, one cannot but wonder that *such a writer* had even sense enough to conceal himself under a mask.

In conclusion, we are happy to learn, from the cover of this month's Magazine, that "an antidote" to the "dishonest publication" above referred to, "may be soon expected."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DIACONAL DEPARTMENT.

SECTION I.

THE institution of the diaconship is recorded, and its objects specified, in Acts vi.; from which scripture it is plain that this office was originally confined to the poor of the church, and the distribution of such funds as were raised for their support. That the office was strictly temporal is sufficiently evident; nor does it appear that any spiritual function whatever was conferred by the appointment here spoken of. The first proof of this lies in the fact, that the case to be met respected solely the distribution of the church's alms, and that "the seven" were set "*over this business*;" the second, in the fact that the diaconal service is here expressly distinguished from, and even contrasted with, the ordinary and distinctive functions of the sacred office,—“prayer and the ministry of the word.”

Nor is it any objection to this view of the case, that we find both Philip and Stephen, who were among the first seven deacons, exercising spiritual functions, such as preaching and baptizing. Because it is not at all improbable that they were subsequently called to the higher office of evangelists. The case of Philip admits of little doubt; for in Acts xxi. 8, he is expressly called an evangelist, where the fact of his being a deacon is mentioned as distinct from his being an evangelist, thus, “We entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven.” Nor is it without reason that some eminent writers regard the primitive

office of deacon as a sort of noviciate to the higher and more important functions of the sacred ministry; alleging for this opinion 1 Tim. iii. 13, which Macknight, with whom Hammond, A. Clarke, Bloomfield, and others coincide, paraphrases thus: "For they who have performed the office of a deacon with ability and assiduity, secure to themselves an honourable rank in the church, and great courage in teaching the Christian faith." This, however, must be understood of such deacons only as, besides their having "used the office of a deacon well," were likewise διδακτικον, *apt to teach*, —ικανοι και διδαξαι, *able also to teach*; for these are mentioned in holy Scripture as *essential* qualifications for the ministry.

To suppose that any spiritual function was conferred by the appointment recorded Acts vi., is perfectly gratuitous; and yet, upon the whole, the following representation is by no means unsupported: "The deacons, who seem at first to have been chosen merely for the inspection of the poor, and the distribution of the charitable collections, were admitted very early, probably in the time of the apostles, to an inferior part in the sacred ministry; such as attending the pastors in the discharge of the religious offices, and acting under their direction. The deaconship served, in fact, as a noviciate to the ministry." (*Campbell.*)

The qualifications for this office are distinctly specified: "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.—Men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." (1 Tim. iii. 8; Acts vi. 3.) And as to the manner of appointment to this office, we have the following precept: "Let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being

found blameless." Such care did the inspired apostles manifest with respect to the moral and religious character of all church officers; such importance did they attach to an orderly appointment even to the lowest as well as to the highest offices; so anxious were they that, with regard to the arrangements and discipline of the church, all things should be done "decently and in order."

And yet, forasmuch as "the manifestation of the Spirit" is always given *προς το συμφερον*, *for usefulness*; that is, since usefulness is properly *the end* for which God ever bestows his gifts upon mankind; and since, even among private Christians, many are endowed with such gifts as eminently qualify them for some department of his work; even private Christians, without invading the regular offices of the church, may usefully employ whatever talent God has intrusted to their care. Nay, all this they are manifestly required to do. For, besides their being commanded to "exhort one another," the following precept is of universal application in the Christian church: "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (1 Peter iv. 10, 11.) This may relate primarily to persons in office, but certainly does not relate to them exclusively. And since the promotion of his own glory and usefulness to the souls of men, are the great purposes for which God has bestowed such rich and beautiful variety of gifts upon his church at large, every particular church is bound, both by the letter and the spirit of the Gospel, to organize and direct the

spiritual activities of even its private members, in such a manner as may be most conducive to these glorious ends.

Returning to the first institution of the deaconship, it will not be difficult to ascertain the *principle* upon which the office was founded. Why were deacons appointed by the apostles? Plainly, that the latter being less occupied with the temporal concerns of the church, might give their undivided attention to its spiritual interests. "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." It is, however, plain from the inspired epistles, that the apostles still retained and exercised the right of inspection and control in this, as in every other department.

SECTION II.

It has long been upon record that, at an early period in the history of Methodism, the Conference, imitating the conduct of the Lord's apostles, determined to separate, as much as possible, "the temporal and spiritual concerns of the society;"—the temporal department to be managed by stewards chosen for that purpose; "the spiritual concerns to be managed by the preachers." On this principle the Conference has continued to act; leaving the management of temporal affairs to officers regularly appointed, but reserving to itself the chief management in things spiritual. The principle itself is a scriptural one; it is alike approved by reason, and

sanctioned by apostolical practice; and we shall find it carried out in Methodism to the fullest extent. For,

(1.) All funds raised for the relief of the poor, are received and disbursed by stewards appointed for this purpose, in the presence, and by the direction, of the Leaders'-Meeting, composed of the most pious and intelligent persons in our societies.

(2.) All monies raised for the support of the ministry are likewise received and disbursed by stewards appointed for the purpose, by the direction, and under the control, of the Quarterly Meeting, including the financial officers of every separate society in each circuit. These stewards are required to "keep books, wherein all monies collected, received, or disbursed, on account of their respective societies, shall be entered." (*Minutes*, vol. i., p. 229.)*

(3.) The receipt and disbursement of pew-rents, and of collections and contributions in aid of trust estates, is entirely in the hands of the trustees, or of stewards appointed by and accountable to themselves.

(4.) All funds raised for the support of Sunday and day schools, benevolent and strangers' friend societies, &c., are under the management of responsible committees and stewards regularly appointed.

Thus the financial department of the church's busi-

* "It is matter of notoriety, that *all the local contributions* of our societies and friends, constituting by far the largest portion of the whole financial concerns of the Connexion, are now, and have been for a long series of years, regularly paid into the hands of the society-stewards and circuit-stewards annually appointed for this purpose, and expended by them, or under their entire superintendence and direction, according to our established usages and rules. A report of their management in these matters is constantly made by the stewards to the Quarterly Meetings of their respective circuits."—*Minutes*, vol. vii., p. 575.

ness is systematically committed to "faithful men," regularly, and by their own sanction, selected from among themselves; and thus the ministry is, as far as possible, relieved from secular embarrassments. Here the preachers have no concern farther than, publicly and privately, to advocate the claims of these several funds; excepting that the superintendent is required to inspect the accounts of various officers, and to attest by his official signature the faithful and correct administration of the whole.

As to our general connexional funds, that is, those which are annually raised for the support of the Wesleyan Theological Institution, Kingswood and Woodhouse-Grove schools, and foreign Missions; those for the relief of poor circuits, distressed chapels, superannuated preachers and widows; in fact, every connexional fund is intrusted to the management of a *mixed* committee of ministers and laymen, annually appointed according to established rule. The names of these several committees, together with their receipts and disbursements, are regularly published in detail, and circulated among the subscribers and benefactors. Seldom has even calumny itself dared to detract from the high character and unimpeachable integrity of these committees; and whenever such an outrage has been perpetrated, the attempt has been notoriously powerless and innoxious.

But there is also an important and extensive department of *spiritual usefulness*, in which Methodism successfully employs the most pious and intelligent portion of its laity. And though none of the following offices is in any wise co-ordinate with the ministry, each confers an honourable distinction, and justly entitles to respect:—

First, LEADERS OF CLASSES.—To each of these is

assigned a number of members, varying from ten to twenty, over whose religious and moral deportment it is his duty to watch affectionately and in the fear of God. He meets them for an hour once in the week; inquires after their spiritual welfare, and counsels, reproves, admonishes, and exhorts, as occasion may require. It is likewise his duty to report to the minister the case of any that are sick, or that walk disorderly. In these weekly meetings for spiritual conversation and united praise and prayer, the weak are strengthened, the erring instructed, the wavering confirmed, and the sorrowful comforted. To this branch of its spiritual discipline, Methodism owes much; and to it, therefore, justly attaches considerable importance.* Once in every quarter, each class is met by the preacher, who then converses with each member personally, renews to each the society-ticket, admits new members at the recommendation of the leader, obliterates the names of such as have "fallen away," and takes an exact account of the state and number of the members in the class.

More fully to carry out the objects of our spiritual union, there is, in all our principal societies, a weekly meeting of the stewards and leaders with the minister; in which meeting the business of that society is regularly conducted. Here cases of delinquency are tried, the poor relieved, inefficient leaders removed from office,

* "It is by these blessed institutions, which so constantly respect the end of all preaching, and of all religious profession, the work of God in the heart, that the blind are led in the right way; the penitent encouraged to the exercise of that faith in Christ whereby cometh salvation; the tempted comforted; and all urged forward, by the counsels of experience, and the prayers of those who are united in this interesting fellowship, to the mark for the prize of our high calling."—*Pastoral Address for 1825. Minutes*, vol. vi., p. 70.

and new stewards and leaders appointed. Here, likewise, all matters affecting the welfare of the society are subjects of discussion and arrangement.

Secondly, LOCAL PREACHERS AND EXHORTERS.—This excellent and truly valuable body of men, under the direction of the superintendent, preach occasionally in those places which, particularly on the sabbath, could not otherwise be regularly supplied.* Not a few of these possess a very respectable degree of general intelligence and pulpit talent; while, actuated by a very commendable zeal for the glory of God, they frequently devote a part of their sabbaths to this “work of faith and labour of love.” By their instrumentality, village preaching has been very beneficially carried to a much greater extent in Methodism than it could otherwise have been; besides which, the office of local preacher serves directly as a noviciate to the regular ministry, into which none can be called out who has not first been tried and approved in this subordinate capacity.

Once in a quarter, the local preachers are met by the superintendent and his colleagues in the ministry; at which meeting improper persons are removed from the office, new candidates are examined and received, and all matters connected with this department of the work disposed of.

* “Let no one be permitted to preach who will not meet in class, and who is not regularly planned by the superintendent of the circuit where he resides.”—*Anno* 1796. *Minutes*, vol. i., p. 344.

“No local preacher shall keep love-feasts without the consent of the superintendent, nor in any wise interfere with his business. Let every one keep in his own place, and attend to the duties of his own station.”—*Anno* 1797. *Minutes*, vol. i., p. 380.

“Every superintendent shall take care that the plans for the local and travelling preachers be made by himself or his colleagues.”—*Anno* 1811. *Minutes*, vol. iii., p. 223.

THE QUALIFICATIONS required in stewards, leaders, and local preachers, are, that they be "men of honest report," sober, grave, pious, "holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." Thus,—

"No person shall, on any account, be permitted to retain any official situation in our societies, who holds opinions contrary to the total depravity of human nature, the divinity and atonement of Christ, the influence and witness of the Holy Spirit, and Christian holiness, as believed by the Methodists."—*Anno 1807. Minutes*, vol. ii. p. 403. *

"Q. XVII. Can any thing be done to promote the holiness and usefulness of our leaders of classes?

"A. Let a strict inquiry be made by the superintendent preacher in the Leaders'-Meeting, at least twice in the year, into the moral character of all the leaders, their punctuality in beginning and ending their class-meetings in proper time, and every thing that relates to their office."—*Anno 1811. Minutes*, vol. iii., p. 224.

THE APPOINTMENT of these various officers is regulated by the following rules; which, while they save the essential rights of the pastoral office by vesting the *nomination* in the superintendent, secure also the rights of the church by making its *approval*, expressed by its representatives, essential to a regular and valid appointment:—

"No person shall be appointed a leader or steward, or be

* "It is deemed desirable, that a series of questions on the most essential points of Christian doctrine, experience, and practice, and embracing also the leading points of our established discipline in reference to the duties connected with those offices respectively, should be forthwith prepared; and that to those questions, when sanctioned by the Conference, distinct and explicit answers should be given, in the proper meetings, by every new leader, local preacher, or candidate for our itinerant ministry, before he can be fully admitted, or officially recommended for full admission, to the exercise of any of the offices here specified."—*Anno 1826. Minutes*, vol. vi., p. 168.

removed from his office, but in conjunction with the Leaders'-Meeting: the nomination to be in the superintendent, and the approbation or disapprobation in the Leaders'-Meeting."—*Anno 1797. Minutes*, vol. i., p. 375.

"As several inconveniences have arisen respecting the change of stewards; to remedy this, let it be observed, that the office of a steward ceases at the end of a year: and every superintendent is required to change at least one steward every year, so that no steward may be in office above two years together, except in some extraordinary cases."—*Anno 1795. Minutes*, vol. i., p. 320.

"Let the superintendent regularly meet the local preachers once a quarter, and let none be admitted but those that are proposed and approved at that meeting; and if in any circuit this be not practicable, let them be proposed and approved at the Quarterly Meeting."—*Anno 1796.*

"No person shall receive a plan as a local preacher, without the approbation of a Local Preachers' Meeting."—*Anno 1797.*

"All local preachers shall meet in class. No exception shall be made, in respect to any who have been travelling preachers in former years."—*Anno 1793. Minutes*, vol. i., pp. 349, 375, 276.

The above may be regarded as constituting jointly the diaconate of Methodism. But in addition to these regular church officers, Methodism has another numerous class of subordinate agencies variously employed for the attainment of the common object,—the conversion and salvation of redeemed mankind. In large and populous towns, and in order to reach a class of persons by whom all public worship is neglected, suitable persons are appointed to conduct meetings for prayer in private houses. Nor have such efforts been in vain. Of the advantage to be derived from scripturally conducted Sunday-schools, Methodism has largely availed itself; and is even anxious so to cherish and direct these valuable institutions, as to render them in the highest possible degree subservient to the best and dearest interests of

the rising race. It is an established maxim with us, that all such institutions ought to be conducted on purely scriptural and religious principles; that they should be connected as closely as possible with the church of Christ, and placed directly under its fostering care and superintendence.*

* SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.—“We rejoice in their number, the zeal with which they are conducted, the sacrifices of so many of our young people who act as teachers, and the benefits which are constantly resulting from them. In proportion to the value of these institutions, we are anxious that they should be so conducted as to yield their full proportion of moral good; and that, in order to this, they should be preserved on their first principles. We would, therefore, exhort all who have kindly and benevolently engaged in them, to watch over them with pious anxiety, that they may fully communicate to the children educated in them the knowledge and influence of the holy Scriptures. Let them recollect, that a Sunday-school is strictly and entirely a *religious* institution, whose object is to train up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and that whatever has not a direct tendency to this end, is equally inconsistent with the principal design of such charities, and with the sanctity of the sacred day on which they are conducted, and that ultimately it will prove subversive of all genuine moral and religious effect. We regard it as essential to the religious character of Sunday-schools, that the children should be carefully instructed, by catechisms, in the doctrines and duties of religion; that they should be accustomed to read the Scriptures, accompanied with the pious advices and explanations of their teachers; that they should, on every sabbath, be regularly brought to the public worship of God; and that the teachers themselves should be persons who ‘fear God and work righteousness;’ ‘apt to teach’ and enforce the truths of experimental and practical piety.”—*Pastoral Address for 1819. Minutes*, vol. v., p. 64.

“Impressed with the solemn and perpetual obligation of a due observance of the sabbath, we urge upon those of you who are officially connected with those important institutions, to avoid everything which even seems to violate the sanctity of that day, especially the practice of teaching the art of writing, and the purchase and sale of school-books; and to keep in view exclusively

In this delightful work, also, several thousands of our pious and intelligent people are arduously, but pleasantly and successfully employed. Indeed, the entire economy of Methodism is so constructed as fully and effectively to employ the best and holiest energies of the church at large; and at the same time to maintain a just regard to the claims of ecclesiastical order and Christian decorum.

the spiritual benefit of the children committed to your care. We regard the rising generation who are under instruction in Sunday-schools, as catechumens, in a course of moral training for the church on earth, and for a blessed immortality; and it is our decided judgment, that those institutions should be conducted in immediate connexion with religious objects, and under the counsel and direction of religious societies; so that the children may be habituated to a regular and devout attendance upon the public worship of Almighty God, and the ministry of his word."—*Pastoral Address for 1827. Minutes*, vol. vi., p. 296.

CHAPTER IX.

IT IS THE CHURCH'S DUTY TO PROVIDE A COMPETENT MAINTENANCE FOR THE PASTOR AND HIS FAMILY: THE PRINCIPLE OF THAT SUPPORT BEING NEITHER STRICTLY COMPULSORY, NOR PURELY VOLUNTARY.

SECTION I.

THE comfortable maintenance of the pastor is but an act of ordinary justice on the part of the church to which he ministers; and those who would place to the account of charity what they contribute to the support of their ministers, certainly cannot have derived their principles of morality from the Bible. The *claim* is founded in natural justice; the *duty* is enjoined by holy Scripture.

Something has already been said as to the nature and extent of pastoral duties: *that*, however, was not intended to exhibit a full view, or even a perfect outline, of the pastoral work; but to ascertain and define, for obvious reasons, certain *official acts* which are peculiar to the pastoral function. Whoever can estimate the weight of this office, as its various duties and responsibilities are described in holy Scripture, may well exclaim, with the devout apostle, "Who is sufficient for these things?" The pastor's duties are such as to demand his constant, diligent, and laborious care; and if he must give but what is due to the imperative calls of the pulpit, the church, the house of mourning, and the bed of sickness, it will be absolutely necessary that he should not "entangle himself with the affairs of this life."*

* We have pronounced the ministry of the word to be the grand and primary function of the Christian minister; and we have no

This is, in fact, a question upon which a divine judgment has been already pronounced: "The labourer is worthy of his hire." Such was the declaration of the Lord himself. Thus also St. Paul: "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." (1 Cor. ix. 11—14.) "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." (Gal. vi. 6.)

As to the amount of salary to which a minister of religion is justly entitled, the Scriptures will no more excuse the *hard measure* to which the cruel parsimony of some would reduce it, than justify the enormous

wish to neutralize or even to qualify such an assertion. But neither would we be understood as speaking disparagingly of other important duties of the pastoral office. Many duties not immediately connected with the pulpit demand the pastor's most solicitous attention; and a certain amount of private intercourse with his flock is not only indispensable on its own account, but really necessary to give the most effective public ministry its full amount of spiritual efficiency. But if even the public ministry is to be rendered what it ought to be, the life of a minister must be one of most devout, intense, and prayerful application to reading and meditation. The following sentiments are alike beautiful and just:—

"As Christians, we are led to search 'what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.' Ought not then our ministry to exhibit the results of this exploring, in a more comprehensive, unctious, and endearing display of our grand subject? If our office be to open a mine of 'unsearchable riches,' should we not plant our steps deeper into this golden storehouse, and thence draw out for our sabbath ministrations more enriching treasures? If we insist upon growth in our people, must we not show it in our ministry? The same motto is for minister and for people, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after.'"—*Bridges on the Christian Ministry.*

revenues and splendid emoluments to which the rapacity or ambition of others would extend it. For the laborious pastor, both Scripture and reason claim a *liberal* stipend; such as shall not only free him from the pressure of worldly anxiety, but leave him something to expend in acts of charity.

With regard to the *principle* of this support, we have described it as being neither strictly compulsory nor purely voluntary. The question of *legal* or *state compulsion* for the support of religion, is one with which we have not even a remote concern. Our object is simply to elicit and unfold a principle of the divine economy, as exhibited in the original constitution of the Christian church. The three following *postulæ*, as they are clear deductions from the word of God, so will they be sufficient to explain our meaning. (1.) The church of Christ was originally a voluntary society. (2.) From the members of that society, the support of the Christian ministry was originally derived. (3.) On becoming a member of the church, each individual was *required* to contribute to the support of the ministry. Hence the impost became so far *compulsory* in its nature, that any one refusing it would be virtually excluded from the society; and yet it remained so far *voluntary*, that the only rule suggested by holy Scripture is, "Every one as God hath prospered him—as of the ability which God giveth."

SECTION II.

IN the constitution of Methodism it is assumed as a principle, that the minister of Christ ought to devote himself wholly to the duties of his sacred calling; and that, whatever it may be proper to do in particular emergencies, it is not possible at the same time to fulfil

the duties of the Christian ministry and prosecute a worldly business. In the Conference of 1768 the question was asked, "Should itinerant preachers follow trades?" When, on the ground of its being unsuited to the dignity of the sacred office, pernicious in its consequences, and inconsistent with the word of God, those preachers who had been any way concerned in trade, are exhorted "to give up all, and attend to the one business." Among other things it was now asked, in reference to the prohibited practice, "Is it well consistent with that scripture, 2 Tim. ii. 4, 'No man that warreth,' (*takes on him the profession of a soldier, as we eminently do,*) 'entangleth himself with the affairs of this life:' plainly referring to the Roman law, which absolutely forbid any soldier to follow any other profession?*" Is it well consistent with that word, 'Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to teaching; meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them?' Can we be said to give ourselves to these things, if we follow another profession?" (*Minutes*, vol. i., p. 78.)

At the Conference of 1804, the subject was again resumed, when the above rule was made absolute by the following minute:—

"Q. XVIII. Do we agree to confirm our former rules, prohibiting the travelling preachers from engaging in secular concerns?

"A. Certainly; and we determine, that if any travelling preacher or missionary be employed in, or carry on, any trade, he shall, on proof thereof, be excluded from the itinerant plan; as we judge that such a pursuit of private emolument is

* "The apostle, by applying the Roman law respecting soldiers to the ministers of the Gospel, hath established a *scripture canon*, whereby all who undertake the office of the ministry are prohibited from following such secular businesses as engross their attention, and require much time to execute."—*Macknight*.

incompatible with our ministerial duties.”—*Minutes*, vol. ii., p. 241.)

Thus, in order that they may more fully and effectively devote their lives to the service of God and of his church, Methodism forbids its ministers to follow any scheme of worldly profit; and throws them for their entire support upon the freewill offerings of the societies whom they serve in the Gospel of Christ.

Of course, the Methodist societies are based upon the principle of voluntary association; and it is a fact also, that every member of our societies to whom God has given the ability, is *required* to contribute to the support of the ministry.* The following are Mr. Wesley's own words relative to this subject:—

“Q. XXXI. Have the weekly and quarterly contributions been duly made in all our societies?

“A. In many it has been shamefully neglected. To remedy this:—

“1. Let every assistant (superintendent) remind every society, that this was our original rule: Every member con-

* During the dissensions of 1834 and 1835, some unprincipled men endeavoured to wrest the reins of pastoral discipline out of the hands of the preachers, by inducing the members of our societies to “stop the supplies,” as this enormity was technically called; a device unequivocally characteristic of the men with whom it originated. Of course those persons who acted upon this principle, were regarded as, *ipso facto*, cutting themselves off from our religious fellowship. For, although there is within the pale of Methodism, a place for even the poorest of the poor, and though no one is required to contribute when, on account of poverty, he is not able; yet, for any man either *factiously* or *selfishly* to withhold the usual contribution, is a direct and flagrant violation of one of those original rules of Methodism, concerning which it is ordained, that, “if there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, we will admonish him of the error of his ways; we will bear with him for a season. But then, if he repent not, he hath no more place among us.”

tributes one penny weekly, (unless he is in extreme poverty,) and one shilling quarterly. Explain the reasonableness of this.

"2. Let every leader receive the weekly contribution from each member in his class.

"3. Let the assistant ask every person, at changing his ticket, 'Can you afford to observe our rule?' And receive what he is able to give."—*Anno 1782. Minutes*, vol. i., p. 159.

Many of our poorer members do not furnish even this small contribution; but there are also many who, of their comparative abundance, regularly contribute more. The constitution of the Methodist classes we have already explained; and, as directed in the above rule, one duty of every leader, in reference to the members of his class, is, "to receive what they are willing to give for the support of the Gospel;" which he is also required, once a week, "to pay to the stewards, and to show his account of what each person has contributed."

All monies received for the support of the ministry are thus paid into the hands of the stewards, from whom alone the minister receives his salary, at a settled rate, but varying in different circuits, according to the comparative poverty or affluence of the societies. The *minimum* of allowances is *fixed* by the established laws of the Connexion; and where a circuit is too poor to raise the requisite amount, a grant is allowed annually from a fund raised for this purpose, by a yearly collection made in all our societies and congregations. Thus the strong assist to bear the burdens of the weak; and something is done towards establishing "an equality." Each circuit has the entire management of its own finances; and, by the Quarterly Meeting of its various officers, fixes the salary of the minister, and regularly conducts the whole finance department. For though the *minimum* of allowance to the preachers is fixed by general laws, that is upon so low a scale, that

the circuits generally exceed it, more or less, according to the circumstances of each.

It is a singular, and even a melancholy fact, that, until the year 1839, no just provision was made by the Methodist Connexion, either for such preachers as had been compelled by age or sickness to retire from its laborious itinerancy, or for the widows and orphan children of deceased preachers.* The Connexion has, however, at length determined, that the preachers shall not be left, in old age and affliction, to the small provision from their own Annuitant Fund, and to a *fund of charity* which can merely palliate a few cases of more grievous destitution; but that they shall receive some regular and stated help *from the people* to whom they ministered, as a just return for services actually rendered. The manner in which the subject was taken up and brought before the Wesleyan community, and the deep and generous sympathy universally manifested, are circumstances equally honourable to the people and gratifying to the preachers. To furnish this equitable provision, will require an average contribution of *sixpence per annum* from each member in our societies.

On the subject of this chapter it is only necessary to add the following law of 1815 :—

“ In future, no new proposal which is designed to effect a

* Let us not, however, be misunderstood. There are many among us, by whom this serious defect has long been felt and deplored; and who, by liberal contribution to the “Auxiliary Fund,” have generously sought to alleviate this evil. But this mode of relief was defective in *two* respects,—in *principle* and in *efficiency*. (1.) It has been regarded as a sort of charity, and necessarily precarious in its resources; whereas the recipients had a claim in equity, to some regular provision. (2.) As stated above, it was by no means adequate; and could only relieve a few of the many cases justly entitled to assistance.—*Vide Appendix to chap. xi.*

general augmentation of the income of the preachers, in the Connexion at large, shall be definitively adopted as a rule, until it shall have received the assent of a majority of the District-Meetings throughout the kingdom, at the time when the financial affairs of the districts are transacted; during which time, according to an existing rule, the circuit-stewards of every circuit in each district are to be invited to attend the District-Meeting, and shall have a right to vote on every such proposal respecting any general increase of allowances.”
—*Minutes*, vol. iv., p. 130.

CHAPTER X.

OF AN ITINERANT MINISTRY.

SECTION I.

It is scarcely necessary to remark, that the first distinguished preachers of Christianity were itinerants. During the life of their divine Master, they preceded or accompanied him to various cities, towns, and villages, "preaching the Gospel of the kingdom;" and after the Lord's ascension, having received the divine command to that effect, "they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." (Mark xvi. 20.) The most ample proof of this is to be found in the Acts of the Apostles; from which inspired records we also learn, that the time spent by these apostolic preachers in any particular place, varied from a few days, or weeks, or months, to several years, just as prospects of usefulness, a sense of duty, or providential circumstances might determine.

True it undoubtedly is, that ministers were appointed by the apostles to particular churches or cities. But there is no reason to believe that these confined their labours to a single city, much less to a single congregation, exclusively. Neither does it appear at all probable, that any church was left to the exclusive care of *only one* pastor. On the contrary, it is much more evident that several pastors in the same vicinity laboured conjointly among several different congregations.* The city or town in

* This appears to have been generally the case during the personal ministry of the apostles. For instance, at Antioch, compare

which the pastor was located, would naturally become the centre of his ministerial operations; but to have confined his exertions to that alone, had been palpably at variance with the enterprising and vigorously aggressive character of Christianity. And though we mean not either to affirm or to insinuate, that the facts above-stated are conclusive against what is commonly called a settled ministry, it may be affirmed that, so long as certain parts of his immediate neighbourhood remain in a comparatively neglected state, a pastor confining his ministerial efforts to some one congregation exclusively, is an anomaly which can plead no warrant or sanction from holy writ. Every minister of Christ is bound, by the very terms of his commission, to prosecute an aggressive warfare upon "the kingdom of darkness," the world of sin; nor can he, by the circumstance of his being the pastor of a particular church, be freed from his original obligation to care for them that are without and ready to perish.

The *end* of the Gospel ministry is to disciple or christianize "all nations;" an object worthy of that God who "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Hence, the success of this ministry must ever combine, in the course of its peaceful but splendid achievements, the conversion of sinners, "the perfecting of the saints, and the edifying of the body of Christ;" until the "earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." And that is doubt-

Acts xiii. 1; xv. 35: at Jerusalem, Acts xi. 30; xv. 6, 22; xxi. 17—20: at Ephesus, Acts xx. 17, 28, 36; Rev. ii. 1, 2. In each of these cases, there was evidently a plurality of pastors and teachers, acting in concert and by common counsels.

less the best and most judiciously *arranged* ministry, which is, upon the whole, best calculated to promote these great designs.

If these things be granted, and we see not how they can be denied, then are we furnished with, at least, a respectable and sufficient *apology* for an itinerant ministry. To say that the Wesleyan plan of itinerancy has its disadvantages, is merely to affirm of it what may ever be confidently affirmed of even the wisest and the best of human arrangements. That it possesses many solid advantages, cannot be reasonably denied. Indeed, the obvious advantages of such a plan have often been confessed; and the practice, in this country, far from being a novel contrivance, is almost as ancient as Christianity itself.*

* "For the first six or seven centuries," says Burn, "the bishop and his clergy lived together at the cathedral church. But to supply the inconveniences of distant and difficult access, the bishop sent out some presbyters into the remoter parts to be itinerant preachers, or occasional dispensers of the word and sacraments."—*Eccles. Law*, art. *Appropriation*.

"The Saxon bishops," says Southey, "used to travel through their diocesses, and where there were no churches, to preach in the open air. At the beginning of our Reformation, preachers were sent to itinerate in those countries where they were most needed; for thus it was thought they would be more extensively useful than if they were fixed upon particular cures. Four of Edward the Sixth's chaplains were thus employed, of whom John Knox was one. At that time it was designed that there should be, in every diocese, some persons who should take their circuit, and preach like evangelists, as some of the favourers of the Reformation called them."—*Life of Wesley*, vol. i., p. 397.

"It is to preaching that Christianity owes its origin, its continuance, and its progress; and it is to *itinerating preaching* (however the ignorant may undervalue it) that we owe the conversion of the Roman world from Paganism to primitive Christianity; our own freedom from the thralldom of Popery in the success of the Reform-

On this subject Mr. Wesley certainly took a strong, perhaps some may think even an extreme, view. Hence he has rendered itinerancy an essential branch of the Wesleyan economy, by the following clause in the Deed of Declaration:—"The Conference shall not, nor may appoint any person for *more than three years successively*, to the use and enjoyment" of the several chapels in the Connexion.* The following quotations contain Mr. Wesley's account of the origin of "the itinerant plan;" together with the reasons which finally determined him to adopt that plan as a part of his polity:—

"When, about fifty years ago, one and another young man offered to serve me as sons in the Gospel, it was on these terms,—that they would labour where I appointed; otherwise, we should have stood in each other's way. Here began itinerant preaching with us. But we were not the first itinerant preachers in England. Twelve were appointed by Queen Elizabeth, to travel continually, in order to spread true religion through the kingdom; and the office and salary still continue, though their work is little attended to." (*Works*, vol. xiii., pp. 245, 246.) "Be the preachers' talents ever so great, they will, ere long, (*that is, if fixed to one particular charge,*) grow dead themselves, and so will most of those that hear them. I know, were I myself to preach one whole

ation; and the revival of Christianity at the present day from the depression which it had undergone, owing to the prevalence of infidelity and of indifference."—*Douglas's Advancement of Society in Knowledge and Religion*.

* In connexion with this unalterable provision must be taken the following minute, which, as a bye-law, is, of course, susceptible of change: "No preacher shall be stationed in any circuit, where he has laboured for one year, or for two or three years successively, till the expiration of *seven years* (now, *eight*) from the time he has left such circuit."—*Minutes*, vol. ii., p. 98; vol. ii., p. 404.

year in one place, I should preach both myself and most of my congregation asleep. Nor can I believe it was ever the will of our Lord that any congregation should have one teacher only. We have found by long and constant experience, that a frequent change of teachers is best. This preacher has one talent; that, another. No one whom I ever yet knew has all the talents which are needful for beginning, continuing, and perfecting the work of grace in a whole congregation." (*Ibid.*, p. 168.)

In favour of the Wesleyan plan of itinerancy, we argue,—

FIRST, Its peculiar adaptation *to extend the kingdom of Christ* in the world. Even those who least admire it as a whole, will frequently admit that no other system is so well calculated for *aggressive* operations. Speaking of Whitefield and Wesley, in connexion with the importance of preaching as an instrument of moral renovation, an eminent writer remarks,—“The spirit actuating the associated followers of the latter of those two great agitators, has impelled forth their whole disposable force (to use a military phrase) to this service; and they have sent preachers into many parts of the land where preaching itself, in any fair sense of the term, was wholly a novelty.” On this ground it is that the same writer adds, “To a confederacy of Christians so well aware of their own strength and progress, it may seem a superfluous testimony, that they are doing incalculable good among our population; more good, probably, than any other religious sect.” (*Foster's Essay on Popular Ignorance*, sect. ii.) Certain, however, it is, that, upon any other than the itinerant plan, both the operations and the success of the Wesleyan ministry must have been comparatively limited in their extent. The truth of this remark is so obvious as to require no farther confirmation.

SECONDLY, On this principle *the edification of the churches* may be promoted to the *greatest possible* extent. To perfect and complete a noble edifice, the skill of several artificers must be combined; and in proportion as each excels in his particular department, and all proceed according to one grand architectural design, will be attained, stability in the fabric, conveniency of arrangement, and beauty or grandeur in the general effect. Now the sacred writers describe the church of God as a beautiful and magnificent structure; of which Christ is the foundation, and in which believers, "as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy temple for the Lord." And while apostles, pastors, and teachers are represented as builders upon this truly majestic design, we are told that God has variously diversified their several gifts, with a special reference to the completing of the whole structure in moral beauty, grandeur, and perfection; "for the *perfecting* of the saints, for the *edifying* of the body of Christ."

Certain it is, that among the ministers of Christ there are "diversities of gifts;" certain it also is, that, in a congregation of any considerable extent, there is almost as great a diversity of states, conditions, tempers, and necessities, as in the compass of a whole community; certain, therefore, it must be, that the real exigencies of such a case can never be so fully and adequately met and provided for, as where this copious diversity of gifts is brought to bear, in concert or succession, upon the entire mass. That the ministry of some individuals is far more richly varied than that of others, is granted; but a man possessing "all the talents which are requisite for beginning, continuing, and perfecting the work of grace in a whole congregation," is yet, and to the end of time will probably remain, *a desideratum*. Fully to meet a case like this, must ever require the utmost

energies of an *united* ministry; and, *cæteris paribus*, that is most likely to succeed, which combines the fairest proportion of that diversity of talent which God has graciously bestowed upon the church at large: the son of consolation, and the son of thunder; the profound theologian, the calm and lucid reasoner; the judicious expositor, and the impassioned preacher; the fire of youth, the vigour of manhood, the wisdom and the gravity of age; the sternness and severity of John the Baptist; the grandeur of Paul, the eloquence of Apollos, the vehemency of Cephas, and the simplicity and unction of the beloved disciple.

It must be observed, that the comparison here is not between one body of Christian ministers and another; it is not, for instance, between the Wesleyan ministers and the body of Dissenting ministers in this kingdom; but between the same ministry, cultivating the same ground, but under two *different modes* of arrangement; that is, as each minister may be permanently fixed in a certain location, or all regularly interchanging upon the plan of our itinerancy. And since an *itinerant* must necessarily combine a larger amount of the above-mentioned diversity than a *settled* ministry, so likewise must an itinerant ministry, kept in a state of vigorous action, produce the most powerful impression upon the entire circle, and contain a fuller, richer, and more varied provision for the complete edification of all the churches, than can possibly be realized upon any other plan.

A THIRD advantage of the itinerant plan is, its obvious tendency to enlarge the sphere of ministerial usefulness; to preserve and to perpetuate ministerial life and energy; and thus to rescue both the pastor and his flock from the perilous situation of the ancient church in Sardis: "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." Innumerable facts demonstrate that such a state, after the lapse

of comparatively few years, is all but the inevitable result of a permanently fixed ministry. We do not affirm that *no man* can preach "one whole year in one place," without preaching both himself and his congregation asleep; this Mr. Wesley does not affirm: still we doubt whether any man can do this without some abatement of ministerial energy. 'And though some excellent men have ministered to the same congregation *principally* through a succession of years, with great credit to themselves and profit to their hearers,* we deem it morally certain that had the time of even these distinguished individuals (and they constitute the exception rather than the *rule* in this case) been divided into several portions of a few years each, spent in so many different spheres of labour, their ministerial success would have been considerably greater in its final amount. Indeed, so far as regards the life, and power, and energy of the Christian ministry, we doubt not but it will be conceded by many who are not at all connected with us, that a well-regulated change of ministers is best.

FOURTHLY, The itinerant plan provides an easy remedy for many painful inconveniencies that are inseparable from a fixed ministry; and thus it supplies what is still an important *desideratum* in many other churches. On the plan of a ministry permanently fixed, both pastor and church are often driven needlessly into a cruel alternative, attended with the most bitter and lamentable results. Perhaps by accident merely, their connexion, once happy and beneficial, is now become as unnatural and mutually galling as it must be permanent; a circumstance by which evils, originally not very serious in

* Many respectable Dissenting ministers, besides occasional changes, act upon the principle of a regular interchange for several weeks successively, in every year.

themselves, have been exasperated until there was no remedy; but either the minister must be starved out, or a ruinous secession must take place. Without intending the least unkindness or disrespect to any, we hold it certain, that in every section of the Christian church such offences must come. It is easy enough to say, the minister, in such a case, ought to resign: but as such a step might cast himself and his family unprovided for upon the world; and as it would probably prove injurious to his ministerial character, *he* wants not powerful reasons to stand out. Thus the mischief becomes incurable. Whereas, on the plan of a regular itinerancy such cases are easily remedied, without any compromise, either of Christian principle or of ministerial honour; inasmuch as a minister can always either remove or be removed without any unnatural effort,—without any personal risk or damage, and, provided his conduct be unimpeachable, without any loss of reputation.*

SECTION II.

FAIRLY to appreciate the Wesleyan itinerancy, we must view it in connexion with the spiritual and ecclesiastical *unity* of the Connexion at large. Numerous and extensive as are her separate societies, Methodism knows but “*one Lord, one faith, one baptism.*” Concerning the object of worship, there is no dispute. The God adored in all her worshipping assemblies is, “the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity.” The rule of faith is settled, and the same doctrines are uni-

* Cases of real *delinquency*, and which involve a real loss of ministerial character, form another class, for which, of course, a different remedy must be provided.

versally believed and taught. Hence, when a Wesleyan minister is appointed to some *new* sphere of labour, though they may never yet have seen his face, the churches feel assured that he will bring "no other doctrine" than what they have been accustomed to hear and to regard as of divine authority. As to the nature of the sacraments, and the persons scripturally entitled to receive them, the Wesleyan ministers are united in the same judgment, and "walk by the same rule." Even in the mode of administration, the difference is so trifling as to create no difficulty. And, finally, in every question of real moment, the same general laws and usages guide the administration of Methodism in all places alike.

Thus in Methodism the inconveniencies which would otherwise attend an itinerant ministry, are either entirely avoided or greatly alleviated, BY SYSTEM. On the practice of itinerate preaching among the Saxons, Burn has the following remark: "After the inhabitants had generally embraced Christianity, this itinerant and occasional going from place to place was found very inconvenient, because of the constant offices that were to be administered, and the people not knowing to whom they should resort for spiritual offices and directions;" a circumstance which principally led to the settlement of ministers in parochial cures. Among us, however, this class of difficulties is scarcely at all felt. The regular change of ministers goes on, yet none of the above uncertainty exists. In every place, and in every department of Methodism, the office itself is permanent and unchanging; the regularly appointed and responsible functionary is still there; and all the stated offices of the ministry proceed, with nearly as much order and regularity as if no change of officers took place.

Perhaps the real disadvantages of our itinerancy are of a different kind. "A Wesleyan minister," says a

distinguished member of the Methodist Conference, "must be content almost to lose his identity. He is only one of many, and nothing in himself. His labours, together with all their fruit, go to the general stock, and are lost in the aggregate. It is impossible to know to what extent his ministry has been blessed. No such moral scenes as those which surrounded Baxter at Kidderminster;* Goodwin at Coleman-street; and, in more modern times, Robinson at Leicester, Charles at Bala, and Fuller at Kettering, can ever grow up around a Wesleyan minister. He, above all men, is obliged to repose on his principles, to do good for its own sake, and to love the souls of men because the Saviour has loved his own; for he never can behold a

* The following sketch of one of these "moral scenes" can hardly fail to be interesting:—"If there be one object in this fallen world, to which the eye, jaded by its pageantries and its gloom, continually turns with renovated hope, it is to an alliance such as that which bound together Richard Baxter and the people among whom he dwelt. He, a poor man, rich beyond the dreams of avarice in mental resources, consecrating alike his poverty and his wealth to their service; ever present to guide, to soothe, to encourage, and, when necessary, to rebuke; shrinking from no aspect of misery, however repulsive, nor from the most loathsome forms of guilt which he might hope to reclaim: the instructor, at once, and the physician, the almoner and the friend, of his congregation. They, repaying his labours of love with untutored reverence, awed by his reproofs, and rejoicing in his smile; taught by him to discharge the most abject duties, and to endure the most pressing evils of life, as a daily tribute to their divine Benefactor; incurious of the novelties of their controversial age, but meekly thronging the altar from which he dispensed the symbols of their mystical union with each other and with their common Head; and at the close of their obscure, monotonous, but tranquil, course, listening to the same paternal voice, then subdued to the gentlest tones of sympathy, and telling of bright hopes and of a glorious reward."—*Edin. Review*, Oct., 1839.

large number of affectionate spiritual children, permanently surrounding him, to gladden him in his toils, and to encourage him in his pursuits." (*Dixon's Memoirs of the Rev. D. M'Nicoll.*) These sentiments are not more beautiful than they are just.

On the other hand, it must, however, be observed, (1.) Every Christian minister is *not* a Baxter, nor a Goodwin, nor a Robinson; nor are the "moral scenes" above referred to actually realized in one out of a hundred instances, even where no itinerancy exists to prevent it; not to mention the innumerable cases in which the end of a more permanent ministerial connexion is a melancholy failure, or even decidedly unhappy. (2.) It results from our connexional unity that, in proportion to his character and standing in the ministry, the Wesleyan itinerant is generally received, even into an entirely new circuit, with that confidence and affection which are due only to *tried* character; a circumstance which not only takes off much of the painfulness of separation from former friends, but which also, from the beginning, gives him that moral power over the hearts of his people, which only a more matured personal acquaintance can give the settled pastor of some other denominations. Nor do we believe that any body of Christian ministers are, upon the whole, either more happy in their work, or more affectionately sustained by the prayers of their people, than the Wesleyan ministers are. Besides, (3.) The peculiar discipline of Methodism, not only brings its ministers at once into personal intercourse with the people, but likewise enables them to enter upon a new charge with that extensive and generally accurate knowledge of the peculiar character and wants of the people, which even a longer acquaintance, apart from that discipline, would not always supply. And, (4.) If the

Wesleyan minister can never behold a large number of affectionate spiritual children, "permanently surrounding him, to gladden him in his toils," he does, wherever his providential lot may be successively cast, still gather fruit unto eternal life; in every place, his name becomes lastingly embalmed in the hearts of many, to whom, upon any other plan of labours, he must have lived and died unknown; and it is morally certain, that where *one* soul would have been essentially benefited by his labours if permanently confined to a particular location, *many* such will rise up and call him blessed, and be his "crown of rejoicing, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming."

Deeply impressed, therefore, with the conviction, that comparatively few ministers are fitted to be more extensively useful in a *settled* than in an *itinerant* ministry, while the mass are obviously fitted to be much more extensively useful in the latter capacity, we must still strongly maintain that, upon the whole, a well-ordered change of ministers "is best;" particularly "while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."

It is quite possible that some who concur with us in this sentiment, may yet differ in opinion as to the real merits or defects of the Wesleyan plan. "Whether this system of changing ministers be *essential* to the spiritual interests of the body or not," says the late revered Mr. Watson, "or whether it might not be usefully modified, will be matters of opinion; but the point ought, perhaps, to have been left more at liberty." The first of these questions will hardly be looked upon as matter of opinion by the Wesleyan Methodists; though some will probably concur in the latter observation. The founder of Methodism seems to have regarded the changing system as really "essential to the spiritual interests of the

body." For not only has he constituted it an essential part of his polity, but in his appeal to the societies at large, in "the case of the Dewsbury house," he thus expresses his views on the subject: "I beg therefore, for the love of God; for the love of me, your old and well-nigh worn-out servant; for the love of ancient Methodism, which, if *itinerancy* is interrupted, *will speedily come to nothing*; that you will set your shoulders to the necessary work." (*Works*, vol. xiii., p. 246.) But if itinerancy be regarded as really essential to Methodism, whether any good end would have been answered by leaving the point "more at liberty," admits of very serious doubt. Perhaps, after all, it is best that the thing should be as it is. The beneficial effects of this system upon the Connexion at large are such as amply to repay the cost of removals; and the greater amount of good hereby effected, more than compensates the minister, for divers inconveniencies to which such removals subject both himself and his family.

CHAPTER XI.

OF THE CONNEXIONAL PRINCIPLE.

WE now refer to the union of several distinct congregations or societies, placed under one common pastoral government. This certainly involves nothing that is repugnant to the word of God, fairly and honestly interpreted; nothing that is at variance with the original constitution of the Christian church. Some, indeed, confidently affirm, that the churches were originally independent on each other. Thus Mosheim: "During the greater part of this (the second) century, the Christian churches were independent on each other; each Christian assembly was a little state, governed by its own laws, which were either enacted, or at least approved, by the society. But, in process of time, all the Christian churches of a province were formed into one large ecclesiastical body, which, like confederate states, assembled at certain times, in order to deliberate about the common interests of the whole." (*Eccles. Hist.*, cent. ii., part ii., chap. ii.)

Our present inquiry, however, must be confined to the *first age*; and certain it is, that either *that* must be left out of the above account entirely, or the term "independent," as now used, must be understood with several important qualifications. When the famous dispute about circumcision arose in the church at Antioch, the contested point was plainly referred to a foreign jurisdiction; and so far from being disposed of by the members of the church at Antioch, it was finally settled by a *decree* of the united and associate pastorate of several churches;

namely, "of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem." This fact we hold to be indisputable; and if it will not prove that the united pastorate positively *claimed* this common jurisdiction over the whole, it proves, undeniably, that the constitution of the churches was such as *to admit* this kind of interference. And since, in carrying the appeal to such a tribunal, the church of Antioch only acted in concert with Paul and Barnabas, who were both parties to the transaction, *the principle* is obviously sanctioned by apostolic practice. Accordingly, Dwight, although he arrives at a conclusion singularly at variance with the facts of the case, most distinctly admits the three following particulars connected with this memorable affair: (1.) "That the church at Antioch sent their messengers to Jerusalem, to obtain a decision concerning a question incomparably more important than any other which agitated the Christian world during the first century." (2.) That "under the immediate instructions of Paul and Barnabas, it is impossible that this church should not have known the *proper tribunal* to which their messengers were to be sent, for the purpose of obtaining this decision." (3.) That "they *actually sent them* to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem." The truth of the matter seems to be, that the churches, at this time, so far from having adopted *the modern notions of independency*, regarded themselves as being placed under one common government and pastoral superintendence; to the paternal care, united wisdom, and pastoral authority of which, they might with safety and propriety refer the settlement of their disputes.*

In itself, the principle under consideration cannot be deemed objectionable, being, in fact, but the principle of

* *Vide* note, pp. 104, 105.

voluntary association, among parties who profess to be of "the same judgment" in "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Such being really the case, we are entitled to plead on behalf of the connexional principle as adopted by the Wesleyan Methodists, that it is strongly recommended by its own peculiar advantages. The institution of church unions or confederacies, is supposed to have had its origin among the Greeks; to whom it is thought to have been suggested by the system of political or state confederation, which at the time existed among them. But, says Mosheim, in the place last quoted, "these ecclesiastical associations were not long confined to the Greeks; their great utility was no sooner perceived, than they became universal, and were formed in all places where the Gospel had been planted." That the institution is liable to abuse, is freely admitted; but its great utility, under prudent management, cannot reasonably be called in question.*

FIRST, This principle affords the strongest possible guarantee for the safety of *particular churches*; the

* "Under any circumstances, a close association and unity among religious societies, possessing the same canon of faith and the same form of administration, would have been natural and desirable; but, under the pressure of common danger and calamity, it was not only reasonable but necessary. But it cannot be asserted that the papal system was the *necessary* offspring of the early catholic church; for if so, it would have arisen in the eastern as well as in the western communion. The worst principles of that system proceeded from causes posterior far to the second century; and the union of the religious societies which at that time constituted *the church* was, in our opinion, an instrument in God's hands, both for the preservation of sound doctrine amidst the numerous and irrational deviations of heresy, and also for the association of the faithful in discipline, and in devoted resistance to the attacks of persecution."—*History of the Church, &c.*, by the Rev. G. Waddington, A.M., vol. i., p. 201.

surest preservative against corruption of doctrine, apostacy, and annihilation. "A church really independent can neither give nor take interference, however serious or necessitous the case; the inviolability of its own jurisdiction absolutely forbidding all interposition whatever. Circumvallated and inaccessible, it presumes on its own competency to meet and overcome every exigency that can transpire within its own enclosure. It is true, independent churches may coalesce to defend themselves against a common but external enemy; but they cannot apply that coalition to questions of internal and individual polity." The inherent weakness of this system is, therefore, most apparent when some serious internal mischief is to be grappled with. Let but some powerful enemy arise within, and then it is more than probable that the church's independency must prove its ruin. "Two circumstances may occur to break up the church modelled upon the principle of independency. (1.) When the majority of its members resist Christian discipline, or espouse heterodox tenets. (2.) When the minority of numbers becomes the majority of influence, and that influence is employed to bribe and corrupt the minister in his pastoral fidelity. In either case, nothing can save that church from apostacy or extinction. A connexion, modelled as the Wesleyan body is, can alone surmount a difficulty of this sort." (*Welch's Wesleyan Crisis*.) From the same inherent weakness it has also been known to result, that a dispute between pastor and people, or between two parties in the church, has ended in the utter ruin of a flourishing interest; when the ordinary resources of such a connexion would as certainly have averted the calamity.

Much as it is to be regretted, here also "it must needs be that offences will come; and woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." Still, to be unable to

grapple with such evils when they do arise, is a serious defect in any system of church polity. A few years ago, a new Dissenting interest was established in the town of ——. A very commodious chapel was erected, a large and respectable congregation was collected together, and a church was formed, with every prospect of success. For a time the most perfect harmony prevailed; *peace* was within her walls, *prosperity* within her palaces. But, alas! the demon of discord at length appeared within. Either the minister had a dispute with a part of his church, or *they* with him; and faction, and strife, and fierce debate ensued. In the same town and neighbourhood were several highly respectable and able Dissenting ministers. Much grieved at what they saw and heard, they doubtless rendered such assistance as the circumstances of the case would admit. They counselled and advised; but this was of no avail. And since the constitution of the church forbade any other kind of interference, war still went on, and all was lost: the congregation was scattered; the church was annihilated; the minister was driven from the pulpit; and the chapel was irrecoverably lost to the denomination for which it was erected. Whereas, we feel confident that, in the Wesleyan Connexion, cases of far greater difficulty have been settled to the entire satisfaction of all the parties concerned, excepting only some few individuals with whom the mischief originated, and in whose repentance or expulsion it became extinct.

Had the case just stated occurred within the Wesleyan Connexion, it must speedily have been brought before some of the regularly constituted connexional authorities; and there have been fully and impartially investigated before a tribunal to which *all parties*, in such a case, are alike amenable, and which possesses power to adjudicate. The probability is, that counsel and serious

admonition, backed by authority, would have proved quite sufficient to heal the breach; at all events, the church would have been saved, and left in the peaceful and secure enjoyment of its scriptural rights. For, to suppose the worst that could occur, had the minister and his adherents been the *offending* party, *he* would have been removed, and subjected to proper discipline; and *they* must either have returned to a sense of duty, or have been separated from the body. Had the minister and his adherents been the aggrieved and *injured* party, the faction must either have been reclaimed or scattered, by some act of discipline; while the pastor and the sound part of his flock would have been effectually protected and supported.

To every truly Christian church, the conservation of doctrinal purity is at once a primary duty and a matter of the most vital consequence. And it must be clear to every reflecting mind, that, whatever may be the system of doctrines publicly professed, a rigid Calvinism or a scriptural and evangelical Arminianism, the *liabilities* to serious defection must be incalculably greater in churches isolated and independent, than in a well-regulated religious Connexion. The reason is obvious. Because, in the former case, the only check to the introduction of pernicious error lies in a single congregation, perhaps small in numbers, and still more deficient in sound theological knowledge and Christian principle; whereas the latter comprises, in addition to this, the combined intelligence, the watchful zeal, the moral power, and the conventional authority of a numerous body of Christian ministers, much more extensively read in divine subjects, acting in concert, and naturally and conscientiously jealous of any departure from the common faith. And by how much more difficult it must be to delude or to corrupt the one than the other, by so much

does the connexional principle contain the stronger guarantee for the preservation of doctrinal purity.*

Nor, in the present state of theological science, can it be alleged that such an arrangement may prove injurious to the cause of truth, by the prevention of full and fair investigation. Theology is science in which there is a limit to discovery, but no end to innovation. In fact, the age of discovery is already past. And whilst every sincere Christian and Christian minister is left perfectly free; free to unite with that particular church whose principles are most in harmony with his own; it is perfectly and manifestly right, that those religious communities which are conscientiously satisfied as to the scriptural orthodoxy of their own doctrinal standards, should meekly but firmly resolve, to "walk by the same rule, and mind the same things."

* Notwithstanding what has been alleged to the contrary by a modern writer, we fear not to affirm that, on all the leading subjects of Christian theology, the Wesleyan ministers are perfectly united together in the same mind and the same judgment. A perfect agreement in mere matters of opinion is not necessary to an *unity of faith*: to expect such an agreement would be absurd. But that "in some parts of the Connexion, the doctrine of justification by faith has been either incautiously or more boldly impugned, and views maintained differing little from the Romish theology," is a most unfounded assertion; and one which could never have found a place in "An Analytical View of all Religions," had not the writer of that work been either ill-informed or ill-disposed with regard to Methodism. Perhaps this gentleman has "incautiously" imputed to the Wesleyan Methodists the *anti-Wesleyan* sentiments, on this subject, which have been promulgated and warmly defended "in some parts" of another "Connexion." We believe there is scarcely a minister in the Wesleyan Connexion who will not be ready to support the following just demand: "Mr. Conder must either produce proof of this most astounding assertion, or, as a man of truth, he must cancel the injurious statement."—*Vide* note A. to chap. vi. of *Cent. Volume*, by the Rev. T. Jackson.

SECONDLY, On this principle, *individual protection* is secured to a greater extent than it could be on almost any other. A religious society necessarily implies the existence of mutual rights and obligations; *duties* and *claims* alike inviolable and sacred. The condition on which the pastor tenders his services is, the enjoyment of certain defined and scriptural immunities. The members, on the other hand, willingly support the institution, and, in return, they righteously expect to enjoy certain spiritual advantages; as the secure and peaceful occupancy of their place of worship, pastoral attentions, and the faithful administration of God's holy word and sacraments. Now it is certain that, by corruption of doctrine, by a departure from or neglect of discipline, by faction or misrule, these several rights may be so violated as to inflict serious injury upon the aggrieved parties. And yet a Connexion such as that of which we speak, and this alone, can insure individual protection to all the members of the community; the weak and the strong, the official and private. In a state of independency, *the strongest party*, however corrupt its principles or flagitious its designs, can trample upon an opposite party, however innocent, however deeply injured. From the *strongest party*, there is *no appeal*; against its despotism, there is *no shield*; for the injuries it can perpetrate, there is *no redress*. Whereas, though the party *suffering* be a minority, and as powerless as it is oppressed; and though the party *inflicting* wrong be a majority ever so strong and rampant; a Connexion on the principle for which we contend, can annihilate the injurious and protect the injured cause. Whilst, therefore, congregational independency affords to a people a partial relaxation from the just and scriptural restraints of pastoral authority, (at best a *questionable*, and not unfrequently a most *pernicious* boon,) it takes away their *shield*; and from

the moment in which they adopt this polity, it may with truth be said, "Their defence is departed from them."*

THIRDLY, The facility with which its concentrated energies may be brought to bear upon a single point, gives a religious Connexion an immense advantage in the prosecution and attainment of every great and holy enterprise. That union is strength, is an axiom, the truth of which is too well understood to require from us a single illustration; and it is notorious that, both in defensive and in aggressive warfare, the effect of a combined and well-directed movement has often proved, not only beneficial, but grand and decisive, when the disjointed action of even superior forces must have sustained inevitable defeat. Of this advantage Methodism has frequently availed itself with truly admirable success.

With merely secular politics, Methodism, in its corporate capacity, has no concern. The bond and basis of its union is religion; and the objects for which it exists are purely religious. With politics it interferes not, except when politics essentially affect religion itself. When the inalienable rights of humanity have been cruelly outraged, as in the case of the enslaved African; or when legislative attempts have been made, whether to procure a more decent and Christian observance of the Sabbath, or to deprive Englishmen of an important part of their religious liberties, or to force upon the nation a

* "It is perfectly obvious, that in a debate between two members of the same church, the parties may, in many respects, stand on unequal ground. To bring the parties, in these circumstances, as near to a state of equality as human affairs will permit, it seems *absolutely necessary that every ecclesiastical body should have its tribunal of appeals*; a superior judicature, established by common consent, and vested with authority to issue finally all those causes which, before a single church, are obviously liable to a partial decision."—*Dwight*.

system of education generally believed to be essentially injurious to our common Christianity; on these great and really religious questions, the spirit of the Connexion has properly and beneficially exerted itself, to redress the enormous wrong, to attain the good, or to avert the impending evil. But to merely political purposes it cannot be made subservient; nor will it become the tool of any political party.

That any attempt thus to prostitute the *connexional energies* of Methodism must necessarily prove abortive, is most certain; and, to all who understand the subject, must be sufficiently apparent; because the Connexion at large is as much *divided* in general politics, as it is one and *united* in religious interests. It is, however, highly creditable to Methodism, as a purely religious Connexion, that its great connexional efforts have ever been directed to such objects, that men of the most opposite political sentiments have been able cordially and zealously to co-operate with each other. Equally creditable is the singular fact, that whilst Methodism cannot bring in one of its many thousands of members into the Commons' House of Parliament, it can, even in addition to its ordinary efforts in the cause of God and humanity, realize, by one great special effort, the noble sum of £200,000, for the hallowed purposes of "pure religion and undefiled:" a stronger proof, both of the correctness of its principles and the integrity of its conduct, impartial reason cannot require.

FOURTHLY, Equally palpable is the advantage which this principle gives to a religious community, in all *ordinary* as well as in extraordinary efforts, to extend the kingdom of Christ, and to diffuse the blessings of vital Christianity in the world. Whatsoever things are lovely, or pure, or honest, or of good report, may be extensively promoted by its vigorous aid. Fully to estimate the

moral and spiritual advantages derived from the silent but powerful operation of this principle in Methodism, must be impossible. The purity and vigour of its public ministry; the creation, from time to time, of new and flourishing societies in various parts of the moral desert; the maintenance of a regular Gospel ministry in many circuits where the societies are too poor or too weak themselves to bear the burden; the relief of distressed chapels; the formation and support of Missionary and school societies in different parts of the kingdom; and the funds annually raised for the support of other noble and truly Christian institutions, all are, more or less, the happy result of the adoption of this principle. For though it would be preposterous to suppose that without it *nothing* could be achieved, it is quite certain that, upon no other principle could any of these great objects have been prosecuted to the same extent, or realized with the same success.*

To say the least, therefore, the connexional principle as adopted in Methodism is neither opposed to reason nor at variance with the word of God; while the moral and spiritual advantages resulting from its adoption are obviously great and manifold. And in the face of its past history, no man can justly charge us, either with an extravagant partiality for our own, or an unfair disparagement of other's systems, when we affirm that, alike unsustained and uncorrupted by political power, the Wesleyan Connexion can successfully "grapple with a difficulty that would overwhelm and crush any local or independent church, however respectable or influential."

That these inestimable advantages can be realized without some kind of sacrifice, is not to be expected.

* *Vide* Appendix to this chapter.

And we admit that, in Methodism, there are questions on which both ministers and people are left less at liberty than they would be, in a state of congregational independency. We feel assured, however, that the system affords to all parties the unobstructed power of doing right, and only interposes its restraints where restraint is felt to be really advantageous. No other system gives its ministers so much power to do good, connected with so little power to do harm. No system affords to the people a richer provision of spiritual edification, nor *equal* means of spiritual usefulness. To a mind properly imbued with Christian feeling, the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom is an object for the accomplishment of which no ordinary sacrifice will be thought too dear. In this respect the Wesleyan system is incomparably effective; and in proportion as the people willingly co-operate in its plans, they share in the glory of its triumphs, and shall in no wise lose their reward. So that, if in some respects Methodism subjects both ministers and members to a kind of restraint from which congregational independents are free, those who sit under its shadow may retire to the grave consoled by the reflection that, in return for these trifling sacrifices, they have enjoyed a far richer spiritual inheritance, and have been united in far more extensive and successful plans of spiritual usefulness, than otherwise they could have been.

To combine the moral power and effectiveness of a connexion with the unlimited freedom of an independency, is impossible; and, therefore, to attempt it is absurd. Particular societies and their various officers are bound to consider this, and cheerfully to submit to general law and usage. Hence, also, it becomes a matter of the very highest importance to the well-being and peace of the entire community, that the ministers of our body, and more especially its superintendents,

should fully understand and uniformly walk by *Methodist rule*. To correct a local deviation from regular usage will sometimes be highly necessary, and it will require much wisdom, firmness, and love; but, as a rule, it may be confidently affirmed, that to innovate upon the established order of the Connexion, in however small a matter, is to lay the foundation of inevitable mischief.*

* *Vide* note (B) at the end of this chapter.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XI.

As constituting an important part of our connexional system, there are several financial arrangements which may be properly noticed here; as,—

1. THE CONTINGENT FUND.—This fund was instituted in the year 1749. Its objects were originally, to relieve the Connexion from pecuniary difficulties, to meet extraordinary expenses, and, on the principles of a home mission, to spread the Gospel, in the life and power thereof, from sea to sea. To accomplish these objects, Mr. Wesley proposed to raise “a general fund,” by a yearly subscription in all the classes, concerning which he says: “Let every member of our society, once a year, set his shoulder to the work; contributing more or less, as God has prospered him, at the Lady-day visitation of the classes. Let none be excluded from giving something, be it a penny, a half-penny, a farthing. Remember the widow’s two mites! And let those who are able to give shillings, crowns, and pounds, do it willingly.” (*Minutes*, vol. i., p. 44.)

To render the yearly income of this fund more adequate to the average amount of the demands upon it, it was determined in the year 1815, that “an annual public collection, for the support and spread of the Gospel at home, should be made in all our congregations throughout the kingdom, in the early part of the month of July; which should be brought to the ensuing Conference, and applied in aid of the old-established yearly collection, which is made privately in the classes.” (*Minutes*, vol. iv., pp. 127, 128.) And as the only practicable means of preserving the fund itself from future embarrassment, the Conference of 1819 wisely determine, “That their grants to deficient circuits shall in future be limited, as nearly as possible, to the probable amount of the sum placed from year to year at their disposal; so that the *expenditure* may not usually or materially exceed the estimated *income* of the Connexion.” (*Minutes*, vol. v., p. 50.) The good already effected by the instrumentality of this fund is immense; and its

present importance to the Connexion at large must be apparent to every one who attends to the annual statement of its receipts and disbursements, as published in the Minutes. The following prospective calculation is from the Minutes of 1840:—

	£.	s.	d.
Yearly Collection of 1841	6839	0	0
July Collection	3676	0	0
Surplus from last year's Estimates	830	0	0
	11345	0	0
To be reserved for the payment of Extraordinaries	2345	0	0
Sum to be provisionally granted for Ordinaries .	9000	0	0

2. THE GENERAL CHAPEL-FUND.—The object of this important fund is the relief of distressed chapels in various parts of the Connexion; either by enabling trustees to reduce the debt upon their several trust-estates, or by affording such annual assistance as may enable them to pay the interest of monies borrowed upon them. The original mode of relieving such cases was, to allow the preachers to make collections for particular chapels in a certain number of circuits. The plan was obviously liable to many serious objections; and so early as the year 1788, these collections had become “a great grievance both to the preachers and people.” (*Minutes*, vol. i., p. 210.) The Conference of 1808 recommended to the consideration of the next ensuing District-Meetings a proposal that, in order to secure the above objects, “and to relieve the preachers from the disagreeable necessity of going to collect money from circuit to circuit, while their own proper work is unavoidably neglected, a fund for chapels should be formed in each district by monthly or quarterly subscriptions.” (*Minutes*, vol. iii., p. 32.) This plan of district funds was, however, abandoned. The Conference of 1817 next appoint “a preparatory Committee,” (to meet early in the following year,) “for the purpose of examining and arranging all proposals and suggestions, relative to a General Chapel-Fund, which any of our friends have already furnished, or may deem it proper, before that period, to furnish;” (*Minutes*, vol. iv., p. 330;) and

the following resolution of the said Committee was approved and finally adopted by the Conference of 1818 :—

“That a *General Chapel-Fund* for the relief of those Methodist chapels which are deeply involved in debt, and whose trustees have not local means of meeting their own annual expenses, should be instituted in our Connexion, the supplies for which fund should be raised in the following ways; namely, (1.) By regular *private subscriptions*, to be raised in every circuit in the month of February in every year; (2.) By a *public collection*, to be made in every chapel through the Connexion in the month of February every year; (3.) By *legacies*; (4.) By *annual subscriptions*, to be requested from the *trust-funds* of every chapel in the Connexion.” (*Minutes*, vol. iv., pp. 438, 439.)

THE CHAPEL-FUND LOAN-COMMITTEE.—In the year 1827 the principles of the General Chapel-Fund received an important modification. Proposals had already been made for relieving this fund, by special efforts in behalf of those chapels whose debts were most oppressive, from a part of the annual burden now entailed upon it. The plan now adopted was, at once effectually and permanently to relieve such cases, and so remove them from the list of annual claimants upon the Chapel-Fund by a *final grant*, to be met by special *local effort* on the part of the trustees and their friends. To accomplish an object every way so desirable, it was determined, by the intervention of a loan, to anticipate, for a few years, a part of the annual income of the Chapel-Fund; endeavouring, as far as possible, so to reduce the annual amount of *ordinary claims* upon the fund by these *extraordinary grants*, as to enable the managing Committee yearly to pay off a fixed proportion of the previous loan, without depriving the remaining claimants of their ordinary mode of relief. In this way, several loans have been successively taken up. The gentlemen appointed to negotiate these loans, and to manage the distribution of them, constitute what is called “The Chapel-Fund Loan-Committee.”

More fully to carry out these salutary plans, the sum of £24,000 was placed at the disposal of the Committee by the Committee of the Centenary Fund. The vast importance and efficiency of these arrangements is sufficiently attested by the

fact, that, besides affording *annual relief* to some hundreds of cases, chapel debts, to the amount of £216,182, have by these means been annihilated during the last twelve or fourteen years.

3. THE CHILDREN'S FUND.—By the institution of this fund, two great objects are effectually secured; the burdens of the Connexion are equalized, and the change of preachers, an essential branch of our economy, is immensely facilitated. (*Minutes*, vol. v., p. 166.) Equal justice to the preachers requires that the income of those who have a numerous family of children to maintain, should be somewhat greater than that of others whose ordinary domestic expenditure is much less considerable: the same law requires that large societies should bear a proportionably greater part of this burden than smaller societies. But so to appoint every preacher from year to year, that the number of preachers' *children* stationed upon each circuit shall always bear an equitable proportion to the number of *members* in each, is hardly possible; and must be utterly impracticable, so long as any just regard is had, either to the spiritual interests of the Connexion at large, or to the wants and wishes of particular circuits with regard to preachers. And yet, excepting in so far as this could be accomplished, the burdens of the Connexion could not, without some special arrangement, be equally distributed. To meet this difficulty, preparatory steps were taken by the Conference of 1818. In the year 1819 the Children's Fund was established; and was at once sanctioned by the almost universal approbation of the Connexion. Indeed, nothing can be imagined more simple, more equitable and beneficial, than the principle of this arrangement; namely, (1.) To ascertain the whole number of preachers' children to be provided for by the Connexion; (2.) To ascertain what number of members ought in general to be made responsible for the allowance, at a settled rate, to one child; and, (3.) To make each circuit responsible to the treasurers of the Children's Fund, for the amount which fairly belongs to it according to the principle of proportion to numbers in society.—*Vide Minutes*, vol. iv., p. 445; v., p. 46—50.

4. THE AUXILIARY FUND for superannuated preachers and preachers' widows.—The claims of these individuals upon their own "Annuitant Society," to which every preacher subscribes

five guineas annually, are usually so small, that their condition has not unfrequently been one of peculiar hardship, and even of extreme distress. Coeval with the Annuitant Society, there has been "a fund of charity" raised by subscriptions among the people, "to be applied only to the assistance of real objects of mercy among the supernumerary and superannuated preachers, and the widows of preachers." (*Minutes*, vol. ii., p. 22.) Such, from the beginning, have been the character and objects of "the Methodist Preachers' Auxiliary Fund." But, after the lapse of a hundred years, the Connexion has at length determined, on behalf of those of its ministers who have been broken by sickness or worn out in its service, that they shall receive some regular and stated help from the people to whom they have ministered, as a just return for services actually rendered; the Auxiliary Fund being made available, "not only for special help in a few cases of peculiar necessity, but for a fair and moderate addition to the means of comfortable support, *in every case where such support has been earned by service*, and where the parties themselves think it right to claim it." At a large meeting of lay-gentlemen and ministers, held in Bristol, in the month of July, 1838, it was strongly recommended that this highly equitable arrangement should form part of the great objects which the Connexion should accomplish during the Centenary year. At another large Centenary Meeting, held in Manchester, in the autumn of the same year, this suggestion was most unanimously and ardently adopted; and a Sub-Committee appointed to digest a plan for this purpose, to be submitted to the District-Meetings which should be held in the month of May, 1839. The plan was finally arranged, and, in strict conformity to our established laws on such a subject, was submitted to every District-Meeting throughout the kingdom, when the stewards of the several circuits were present. The result was such as might have been expected. The object was most cordially approved *by every District-Meeting without exception*; and, subject to a few restrictions, the Conference of 1839 finally adopted the measure, not without expressions of the liveliest gratitude to those with whom the plan originated, and by whose affectionate co-operation it came at length to be adopted.

The claimants upon this fund are divided into seven classes, according to the number of years spent in the service of the Connexion by the preacher to whom, or to whose widow, a sum is to be annually granted. The scale on which the annuitants, according to these classes, are to be allowed to claim, is as follows:—

SUPERNUMERARY PREACHERS.

1st Class—	Preachers who have travelled under 12 years	£15
2d ditto,	ditto, ditto, from 12 to 18 years	20
3d ditto,	ditto, ditto, from 18 to 24 years	25
4th ditto,	ditto, ditto, from 24 to 29 years	35
5th ditto,	ditto, ditto, from 29 to 34 years	40
6th ditto,	ditto, ditto, from 34 to 39 years	45
7th ditto,	ditto, ditto, from 39 years and upwards	50

WIDOWS,

1st Class—		£10
2d ditto	{ Whose husbands travelled for various terms of years according to the Classes in which they are entered —the classifications of Widows being regulated ac- cording to the same scale as that above specified in the case of Supernumeraries.	12
3d ditto		15
4th ditto		15
5th ditto		15
6th ditto		15
7th ditto		15

In raising the sums which, from year to year, may be found necessary for these purposes, the principle of the Children's Fund is so far adopted, that each individual circuit, according to its number of members, is made responsible for its fair and equitable proportion of the entire amount required.

NOTE (B), p. 130.

UNHAPPILY, it has so long been common to find the spirit of real intolerance combined with loud pretensions to liberty of sentiment, that where the one is heard we naturally expect to find the other. There are passages in a certain "History of Dissenters," which, while they profess an ardent "attachment to religious liberty," are but too full in confirmation of the remark, "that the spirit of low Dissent scowls as fiercely on the Wesleyan principle of a society connexion, as it does on the church of England; and that, if circumstances favoured, it would place itself in as determined opposition to the one as to the other."

Since this remark was penned, Dr. Vaughan has published his "Thoughts on the past and present State of religious Parties in England." Speaking of the Wesleyan Methodists, more in the loose and unguarded style of party than is suited to the character of the learned "Professor of Ancient and Modern History," he represents "their polity as singularly opposed to primitive usage and Christian liberty." We very much fear that even so respectable a writer as Dr. Vaughan has fallen into the too common mode of reasoning on this subject; namely, Wesleyan Methodism *is not* ultra Dissent, therefore, *it is* "singularly opposed to primitive usage and Christian liberty." To suppose that Dr. Vaughan has never been at the pains fairly to examine the subject on which he thus writes, is certainly not to pay him a very high compliment; but to suppose he has done this, would necessarily involve a conclusion even still less creditable to his candour. We believe the Wesleyans are perfectly willing, that those who prefer the 'congregational form of church polity should adopt it, and without molestation enjoy its supposed advantages. Nor will they be offended at a fair and candid examination of their own principles, by those who differ from them. But against this style of loose and unsupported assumption, they have a right to protest. The Connexion has just completed the first century of its existence; and, dating from the com-

mencement of that period, we believe the cause of "Christian liberty" owes quite as much to Wesleyan Methodism as to congregational Dissent. Neither are we in the least afraid of even Dr. Vaughan *proving*, that the Wesleyan polity is "singularly opposed to primitive usage."

CHAPTER XII.

OF PASTORAL EQUALITY AND CONVENTIONAL SUBORDINATION.

SECTION I.

HERE, again, we must respectfully set aside all merely human authorities; because these, though on various accounts justly entitled to our veneration, can add nothing to the *authority* of the divine institute. And though we are fully aware that the contrary has been affirmed by some, to us it appears undeniably evident, that that divine authority which instituted the pastoral office as a standing ordinance in the church, has placed the pastors of the church upon a perfect equality, as to all the essential powers and functions of their office. The only question here to be decided is, Were bishops originally an order of clergy superior to presbyters, and possessing, *by divine right*, jurisdiction over the inferior clergy, and an exclusive power to perform certain ecclesiastical functions, for instance, that of ordaining to the ministry?

Now, to say the very least, the Scriptures nowhere *affirm* such a distinction and superiority. The word *ἐπισκοπος*, bishop, occurs in the New Testament only *five* times. Once it is applied to Christ himself. (1 Pet. ii. 25.) In 1 Tim. iii. 2, it occurs in connexion with precisely the same description of character as that to which the name of presbyter is attached in other parts of Scripture. In Acts xx. 28, it is applied to the elders or presbyters of the church of Ephesus, who are all styled bishops; and that without the slightest or most distant intimation that any one of these possessed juris-

diction or superiority over the rest. In Phil. i. 1, this title is again applied to the ordinary pastors of the church, without the least reference to a distinction of *orders*. For after all the learned labour of Hammond to prove that "Philippi was a metropolitan see, and so might have several bishops," to attempt to maintain such a position is, as Dr. Adam Clarke justly observes, but "the extravagance of trifling." In Titus i. 7, the word is plainly applied to the same persons as are just before styled elders or presbyters, and who are also spoken of as being "the stewards of God." In no one of these passages is there the most distant intimation of any distinction between the bishop and the presbyter, in character, ministerial authority, duty, or office. And that both these terms are indifferently applied to one and the same office is farther evident from this,—when Titus is directed to ordain as "ELDERS" only such men as are "blameless, not accused of riot, or unruly," the reason immediately assigned is, "For a *bishop* must be blameless, not given to wine, no striker," &c.; which, of course, is no reason at all, unless the elder and the bishop are one in point of office and employment. Nothing, therefore, can be plainer than that *the use of the word επισκοπος, bishop*, in the New Testament, affords not the slightest countenance to the modern distinction between superior and inferior clergy; but, on the contrary, is really fatal to such a distinction.

Much less can it ever be proved, that any officer bearing the title of bishop in the New Testament, exercised any one ecclesiastical power or function which was not common to all the pastors of the church. So far as the word of God knows anything of an *episcopus*, it vests the whole episcopal power in the hands of the presbyter; that is, it constitutes *every* pastor in the church a *bishop*, and no one more so than another. In

other words, whatever pastoral duty or authority is implied in the scripture terms, ποιμαίνειν and επισκοπεῖν, is clearly attributed equally, and without distinction, to all the pastors of the church alike. *Presbyters* are commanded to shepherd "the church of God," only in subordination to Christ, "the chief Shepherd;" they are declared to be "stewards of the mysteries of God;" and they officiated at the ordination of persons to the sacred office. As to the power of ordaining to the holy ministry, there is no one passage in all the New Testament which gives this power at all to bishops, as distinguished from presbyters; whilst in every instance of ordination that the New Testament exhibits, this solemn function was performed either by presbyters, by evangelists, or by apostles.

The argument drawn from the promiscuous use of the terms bishop and presbyter in the New Testament, to prove that the same order of ministers is expressed by them, has justly been pronounced "incontrovertible." But this, in fact, is not the whole of the argument; for to this obvious intercommunity of name, must be added that of office, duty, and qualification; in respect of which the word of God knows no distinction between a bishop and a presbyter. Now that those to whom the Holy Ghost has not only given the same names, but in whom he requires the same qualifications, and to whom the Scriptures assign the same work; nothing being, in these respects, peculiar to one, but every thing common to all,—that these should, notwithstanding, be, *jure divino*, two perfectly distinct and widely different orders in the church, is absolutely incredible, and involves a real contradiction.

The following scripture is too remarkable in itself, and too strikingly confirmative of this view of the subject, to be omitted here: "The elders which are among you I

exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly," &c. (1 Pet. v. 1, 2.) The charge delivered to these presbyters of the church is, to "feed" (*ποιμανατε*, *shepherd*, that is, feed, superintend, and guide) "the flock of God." The same expression is employed by St. Paul in his address to the elders of the church of Ephesus; and by Christ in that most affecting charge to Peter, "Feed my sheep." The word plainly includes all that human agency can do to edify, direct, and keep unto eternal life, those sheep of God for whom the good Shepherd freely laid down his life. That the term includes the whole office, authority, and duty of a scriptural *episcopus*, is certain from what follows,—“taking the oversight,” (*επισκοπουντες*, literally, exercising the bishop’s office, or doing the work of bishops,) “not by constraint.” The conclusion is obvious. For, as the late revered Mr. Watson forcibly remarks, “it cannot, with any shadow of reason, be supposed that the apostle would exhort the elders or presbyters to take to themselves the office and perform the duties of a bishop, if that term really marked out a distinct and higher order; or that he would have considered the presbyters as fitted for the discharge of the whole ministerial office, if there were parts of that office which he knew that it was not lawful for them to exercise.”

The ministerial equality thus unequivocally asserted in holy Scripture, is as distinctly admitted by some of the best and most venerated divines of the English church. Of this number was Archbishop Cranmer, who affirms that “the bishops and priests (presbyters) were not two things, but one and the same office in the beginning of Christ’s religion.” Whatever, therefore,

may be said in behalf of episcopacy, as a merely human arrangement, the notion of bishops as a superior order of ministers to presbyters, invested, in virtue of that order, and by divine right, with powers of government over both presbyters and people, and possessing exclusively the authority of ordaining to the sacred offices of the church, must be regarded as purely fictitious. In fact, the claim implies an usurpation as palpably antisciptural in its character, as even the most arrogant pretensions of the see of Rome.

Certainly the episcopal, considered as an *official* distinction, can boast a very high antiquity. But whether we regard the first Christian bishops as presiding in ecclesiastical assemblies, or as exercising a mild and fraternal jurisdiction over the presbyters of some particular city, it is manifest that their superiority was originally that of *office* rather than that of *order*; and that their episcopal or distinctive authority was purely *conventional*; not an authority which, by divine right, belonged to them as an order of ministers superior to the presbyters; but an authority either acquired by accident, or, for prudential reasons, conferred by the suffrages of their brethren.

To what extent different societies of Christians may associate in one church, under one common superintendence, must be determined by the judgment of Christian prudence and the course of events. To the *principle* of such an association, we have already spoken. And wherever this truly primitive principle is adopted, there must of necessity take place what we have called a *conventional subordination* in the united pastorate. Here that apostolic precept will have the force of a divine canon: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder." Besides, for the more convenient and orderly despatch of public business, various offices

must be created ; and, for the same reason, the authority of office must be respected and upheld. And since it is in the natural course of events to throw men of distinguished talent into the most important offices of the church, the authority of office, the influence of superior talent, and the weight of personal character, will not unfrequently be so combined as to give to some few individuals a very principal part in the directive management of general affairs.*

SECTION II.

THAT the early prejudices of Mr. Wesley were strongly in favour of episcopacy, admits of no dispute ; but, even from the first, his views of the *jus divinum* were those of Cranmer and the first Reformers, rather than those promulgated by Bancroft in the latter part of the sixteenth century. In one of his earliest Conferences the question was asked, " In what age was the divine right of episcopacy first asserted in England ? " To which it was answered, " About the middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign : till then, all the bishops and clergy in England continually allowed and joined in the ministrations of those who were not episcopally ordained." (*Watson's Life of Wesley.*)† In the year 1746,

* See note (C) at the end of this chapter.

† " Mr. Watson obtained a MS. copy of the Minutes of the early Conferences, corrected by Mr. Wesley, from which he has inserted some curious and valuable extracts, which show that, almost immediately after the commencement of his itinerant ministry, and the employment of preachers who had not received episcopal ordination, he adopted those principles of church government and order which he exemplified through the remainder of his life." —*Life of Watson*, p. 539.

Mr. Wesley read Lord King on the constitution of the primitive church, by which he became more fully than ever convinced "that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain." This scriptural right he himself exercised in the year 1784; and in the year following he says, "I firmly believe I am a scriptural *ἐπισκοπος*, (bishop,) as much as any man in England or in Europe. For the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove." (*Wesley's Works*, vol. xiii., pp. 218, 220.) In the same year it was, that the venerable founder of Methodism penned his "last words" to the Conference, in which he solemnly conjures the Hundred whose names are enrolled in the Deed of Declaration, "never to assume any superiority over their brethren;" and particularly "to have no respect of persons in stationing the preachers." (*Ibid.*, p. 217.) This letter was read at the first Conference after Mr. Wesley's decease; when it was resolved unanimously, "That all the preachers who are in full connexion with them shall enjoy every privilege that the members of the (legal) Conference enjoy, agreeably to the above letter of our venerable deceased father in the Gospel." (*Minutes*, vol. i., p. 234.)

In the spirit of Mr. Wesley's dying injunction, the Conference has scrupulously acted from the beginning; and it is assumed as a principle in the constitution of Methodism, that Christian pastors are perfectly co-ordinate in ministerial powers. In its united ministry no one has any superiority over his brethren, except that which they willingly concede to him on account of his years, his piety, his talents, or his services. On the other hand, in so extensive an incorporation as the Wesleyan Connexion, a due subordination to constituted authorities is absolutely essential to the well-being of

the whole; and every Wesleyan minister is, in fact, under subjection,—

I. TO THE CONFERENCE, as supreme.—The TWELFTH rule of an helper is explicit: "Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the Gospel. As such it is your part to employ your time in the manner which we direct; partly in preaching, and visiting from house to house; partly in reading, meditation, and prayer. Above all, if you labour with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for his glory." (*Large Minutes*, p. 18.) And these rules every preacher, on his admission into the body, solemnly engages to keep "for conscience' sake." On being taken into full connexion particularly, every preacher receives a copy of the "Large Minutes," containing the above and various other rules, officially inscribed thus: "As long as you freely consent to, and earnestly endeavour to walk by these rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow-labourer." (*Ibid.*, p. 37.)

The authority of the Conference extends alike to every preacher in the Connexion. No name, however honoured, no length of services, no office, can exempt from its control and jurisdiction. The stated annual examinations respecting ministerial qualification, character, and fidelity, extend alike to all; and every one is equally under authority. Official distinctions exist, and they are duly honoured; but Methodism recognises no irresponsible officer. The authority of the Conference over its own members extends to the power of expulsion from the body, according to the following clause in the Deed of Declaration:—"The Conference shall and may expel and put out from being a member thereof, or from being in connexion therewith, or from

being upon trial, any person, member of the Conference, or admitted into connexion, or upon trial, for any cause which to the Conference may seem fit or necessary; and every member of the Conference so expelled and put out, shall cease to be a member thereof, to all intents and purposes, as though he was naturally dead.”*

II. TO HIS DISTRICT-MEETING, whether specially convened, or in its annual assembly.—The jurisdiction of a District-Meeting extends alike to every preacher in that district, and to every question affecting ministerial character. This meeting has power to examine, to censure, to remove, or to suspend a preacher until the next ensuing Conference; nor is there any appeal from its final decision but to the Conference itself.†

Such an authority the District-Meetings have exercised from the beginning. By a minute of 1797, it is ordained, that “the chairman of each district, in conjunction with his brethren of the committee, shall be *responsible* to the Conference for the execution of the laws, as far as his district extends.”‡ And the last solemnly re-

* Deed of Declaration, 8th prov.

† “Q. 17. Is any regulation necessary respecting the annual examination of preachers in our District-Meetings?

“A. Let it be clearly understood, that every chairman is required to ask the following questions, *distinctly* and *successively*, concerning every brother; namely,—

“1. Is there any objection to his *moral and religious character*?

“2. Does he believe and preach *our doctrines*?

“3. Has he duly observed and enforced *our discipline*?

“4. Has he competent *abilities* for our itinerant work? A *separate* answer to each of these questions is expected to appear in the district-minutes.”—*Anno* 1812. *Minutes*, vol. iii., p. 295.

‡ “The chairman of every district shall be chosen by the ballot of the Conference, after the names of all the preachers in the district have been read to them by the secretary.”—*Anno* 1797. *Minutes*, vol. i., p. 379.

corded judgment of the Conference on this subject is, that "it is indispensably necessary to the purity of our ministry, and to the spiritual welfare of our societies, to retain, and on all proper occasions to use, that *right* of fully inquiring into the conduct of its own members, and judicially dealing with them, which the Conference, in its annual assemblies, and (during the periods intervening between its yearly meetings) by means of its District Committees, has hitherto exercised." (*Anno* 1835. *Minutes*, vol. vii., p. 544.) And whereas attempts had been then recently made to violate or evade the ancient authority of these important tribunals, the same Conference "UNANIMOUSLY DECLARES,—

"That not only the Conference, but all its District Committees, whether ordinary or special, possess the undoubted right of instituting, in their official and collective character, any inquiry or investigation, which they may deem expedient, into the moral, Christian, or ministerial conduct of the preachers under their care, even although no formal or regular accusation may have been previously announced on the part of any individual; and that they have also the authority of coming to such decisions thereupon, as to them may seem most conformable to the laws of the New Testament, and to the rules and usages of our Connexion." And also, "that all preachers who desire to remain in ministerial communion with us are considered as retaining that communion on the distinct condition, that they hold themselves individually pledged to submit, in a peaceable and Christian spirit, to the usual disciplinary investigations, not only of the Conference, but of all its District Committees, whether ordinary or special, when summoned according to our rules and usages; and that any preacher who refuses to submit to the friendly examination of the chairman and of other brethren, or to take his trial regularly and formally, before the preachers either of an ordinary or of a special District Committee, when duly required so to do, shall be considered as, *ipso facto*, incurring the penalty of suspension until the ensuing Conference."—*Ibid.*, p. 549.

III. In their respective CIRCUITS, the preachers are under the official inspection, guidance, and control of the SUPERINTENDENT; who, as the appointed representative of the Conference, is held directly responsible for the faithful administration of Methodism within his own circuit.—Within this sphere, the care of both preachers and societies devolves upon him; and so far as his fellow-labourers and co-pastors are concerned, the rule of his conduct is as comprehensive in meaning as it is laconic in style; namely, “To see that the other preachers in his circuit behave well, and want nothing.” (*Large Minutes*, p. 28.)

In ministerial powers, the helper and superintendent are co-ordinate, co-equals; but as the important ends of a correct and faithful administration are most fully and certainly attained by such an arrangement, a *directive power* is properly vested in the superintendent of each circuit. For a helper to refuse a cordial and zealous co-operation with the superintendent in the discharge of his duties, is a grave misdemeanour in Methodism; to thwart or vex him in the prosecution of his plans, is a serious crime.* The helper has an undoubted right to be consulted, to advise, and even to remonstrate, on various matters of circuit administration; and if personally aggrieved in these respects, he has his remedy in the ordinary tribunals of the Connexion. As to the exercise of spiritual discipline, the law requires that “every case of proposed expulsion shall be brought by the superintendent before the weekly meeting of the

* “The Conference insists, that no helper shall countenance or encourage any person who opposes the superintendent in the proper discharge of his official duties according to our rules.”—*Anno 1806. Minutes*, vol. ii., p. 348.

preachers of his circuit, in order that he may have the advantage of hearing the opinions and advice of his colleagues and co-pastors, before he shall finally decide on the course he ought to adopt." (*Minutes*, vol. vii., p. 581.) But should there, after all, be a difference of opinion, the final judgment of the superintendent must determine the matter; because he is more immediately responsible to the Connexion for all such pastoral and disciplinary acts.

Thus are the great principles of pastoral equality and conventional subordination most beneficially combined in Methodism, upon a scale at once truly grand and comprehensive. And considering the numerical extent of our united ministry, the amount of talent, the spirit of independence, and the diversity of character exhibited among them, the extent to which these two principles are jointly recognised and carried out in our admirable economy, is a thing unparalleled in the history of the Christian church. In so numerous a body, where some must control and others be controlled, the imperfect state of human nature will ever render it preposterous to expect that every individual will, at all times, be perfectly satisfied. And yet, upon the whole, the Wesleyan ministers, as a body, are eminently free, happy, and united. That so few cases of mutual complaint, or even of dissatisfaction, occur among them, is highly creditable to the brethren at large. Nor is there any reason to apprehend that it will ever be otherwise with them. So long as the helpers remember that a superintendent must endure many anxieties, and even annoyances, from which his unofficial brethren are happily exempt, they will cheerfully concede to him the respect which is due to his *official rank*; and so long as the superintendent does not forget that he possesses no inherent *ministerial superiority* over his col-

leagues, he will *use* the authority with which, as an officer of the Connexion, he is entrusted, "as not abusing it." Certainly, the constitution of Methodism will no more sanction an imperious temper in the one, than it will excuse a spirit of insubordination in the other.

NOTE (C), p. 144.

ON this account it has sometimes been alleged, in favour of an episcopal *regimen*, that those by whom the *title* of bishop is repudiated are obliged, in one form or another, to recognise the *office*. Perhaps there is some truth in the allegation. And did those who thus speak contend for no more than that a moderate and well-regulated episcopacy, as a matter of human arrangement, is a form of church polity not at all incompatible with the principles of the New Testament, surely none but a bigot would deny the equity of such a plea. It certainly is a fact not unworthy of observation, especially by the bigots of either party, that while Cranmer, the justly celebrated reformer of the English episcopal hierarchy, solemnly denied the *jus divinum* of episcopacy now so absurdly contended for by a few papalizing churchmen; Knox, the no less famous reformer of the Scottish church, and founder of her presbyterian establishment, was willing, under certain restrictions, to retain the office while he denounced the name of bishops. The judgment of Cranmer has been already produced; and the sentiments of Knox are thus represented by his national historian. Speaking of Calvin's republican form of ecclesiastical polity, Dr. Robertson says, "Knox, who had studied and admired it, warmly recommended it to the imitation of his countrymen; but, on the first introduction of his system, did not deem it expedient to depart altogether from the ancient form. Instead of bishops, he proposed to establish ten or twelve superintendents in different parts of the kingdom. These were empowered to inspect the life and doctrine of the other clergy. They presided in the inferior judicatories of the church, and performed several other parts of the episcopal function." (*History of Scotland*, book iii.)

Dr. M'Crie, however, contends that Robertson has been misled, in this particular, by Spotiswood; that the appointment of superintendents was a mere temporary expedient, and that Knox "declared the episcopal office to be destitute of divine authority." In the second book of discipline, the matter is

thus represented: "We consider that if the ministers whom God hath endowed with his singular graces amongst us, should be appointed to several places, there to make their continual residence, that then the greatest part of the realm should be destitute of all doctrine; which should not only be the occasion of great murmur, but also be dangerous to the salvation of many. And therefore we have thought it a thing most expedient at this time, that from the whole number of godly and learned men, now presently in this realm, be selected ten or twelve, (for in so many provinces we have divided the whole,) to whom charge and commandment shall be given, to plant and erect kirks, to set, order, and appoint ministers, as the former order prescribes, to the countries that shall be appointed to their care, where none are now." (*M'Crie's Life of Knox*, note NN.)

After all, then, it does not appear that any very material difference of opinion existed between these two eminent reformers, on the subject of episcopacy. Knox's superintendents certainly did perform "several parts of the episcopal function;" and, admitting that their appointment was a temporary expedient, it proves that, in the judgment of Knox, circumstances might exist to justify such an arrangement. And if he "declared the episcopal office to be destitute of divine authority," Cranmer avowed the same sentiment, inasmuch as he declared that bishops and presbyters "were both *one office* in the beginning of Christ's religion."

CHAPTER XIII.

OF THE LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY AND APPELLATE JURISDICTION OF THE METHODIST CONFERENCE.

SECTION I.

It is quite plain that such an incorporation as the Methodist Connexion must be governed by LAW; and the Conference is, in fact, that power by which the ecclesiastical regulations of the body are enacted. And though there is, perhaps, no one point upon which the Wesleyan polity has been assailed with so much acrimony and violence as upon this, we despair not to convince the unprejudiced that even this prerogative, as it is really exercised by the Methodist Conference, is capable of a just and scriptural defence. The justice of the case imperatively demands a full and constant recognition of the following FACTS; namely,—

FIRST, That the authority in question is strictly, positively limited, and that in a variety of ways. The first of these positive limitations lies in the fact, that all the parties here concerned solemnly profess to be “under a law to Christ;” and to acknowledge the divine and unrepealable authority of the law of Christ as contained in the New Testament. Whatever may be the case in some other societies, in Methodism, neither the preachers nor the people claim any right to bring the laws of Christ into debate, nor to have it *put to the vote* whether the laws of Christ shall be carried into effect or not. Nor do we speak of the law of Christ in that vague and general sense which admits of an almost indefinite latitude of interpretation; but of that law as the sense

thereof, on every point of real moment, has long been *fixed* by mutual consent. For it must be remembered that, as respects the interpretation of the inspired precept, many points in themselves originally debatable, are here so settled by common consent of all parties as to have become permanently and definitely binding upon all. Now, whenever parties come together thus far prepared to acknowledge the absolute authority of the divine law, the business of legislation in a religious society must necessarily, and *ab initio*, be confined within very narrow limits, and to matters of minor importance.

The next important limitation here to be considered is contained in the fixed and settled principles and provisions of the *Wesleyan* constitution, properly so called. It must not be forgotten that, in many things of the very highest moment, the constitution of Methodism is rendered *unalterable* by the "Deed" of its original Founder. So far, the only alternative left to either preachers or people was, to adopt the system as they found it, or to decline it altogether. Thus the sphere of legislation is again materially contracted, and brought within still narrower bounds. Other important questions have been fairly set at rest by a mutual and solemn compact, many years ago entered into by both preachers and people; a compact which, on the part of the Conference, has hitherto been observed with sacred and inviolable fidelity. And thus the legislative sphere is rendered narrower still.

In confirmation and illustration of the above remarks, the following public documents must be referred to; namely,—

1. Mr. Wesley's "DEED OF DECLARATION," enrolled in Chancery.—This instrument is dated Feb. 28, 1784; and contains a number of provisions which vitally affect the very existence of Methodism. "The identity of

the Conference, and the conditions of its continued existence; the persons of whom it shall for ever consist; their title to appoint preachers to the chapels; the manner of their proceedings; the duration of their sittings; the binding nature of their majorities; the record of their deliberations; and the offices and powers to be created, are all subjects of legal enactment." Here also the itinerant character of our ministry is unalterably fixed; and by the provisions of this Deed, no preacher can ever be appointed to any one circuit for more than *three successive years* at most. Of course, no act of Conference can annul these legal constitutions. So that the Conference is not properly "a voluntary association of ministers, who, being bound by no previously existing laws, are at perfect liberty to act as they please; but of the nature of a chartered body, united and bound by the laws and regulations of the institution." A body, in fact, whose legal security, and even existence, depends upon a strict observance of the terms of its charter.

2. The Wesleyan DEED OF SETTLEMENT.—We are perfectly aware that no *one* particular form of trust-deed has been invariably adhered to in the legal settlement of our chapels. But, in every case, the regular mode of settlement secures the *use* of the chapels to the Conference, *only upon this condition*: "Provided always, that the persons (appointed to them) preach no other doctrine than is contained in Mr. Wesley's 'Notes upon the New Testament' and four volumes of 'Sermons.'" And thus another matter of vital consequence to Methodism, that is, the doctrines to be preached in all our chapels, is unalterably settled by such legal provisions as no act of Conference can possibly annul.*

* "The Conference cannot but consider the decisions of the Courts of Chancery, in the course of the past year, as an instance of the

3. "THE PLAN OF GENERAL PACIFICATION," and certain "REGULATIONS MADE AT LEEDS" in the year 1797. —These two documents have the nature of a solemn, binding compact between preachers and people; and by them many very serious questions connected with the economy of Methodism are permanently settled. For instance, the sole right of the Conference to appoint the preachers; the process by which "the majority of the trustees, or the majority of the stewards and leaders" of any society, may obtain the removal from their circuit of an incompetent or immoral preacher; the regulations under which the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper shall be administered in our chapels; the principles upon which the finance department of the Connexion shall be conducted; the manner in which circuits shall be divided; temporal business in general transacted; members admitted into and expelled from the societies; stewards, leaders, and local preachers appointed, admitted, or removed from office; and meetings extraordinary convened. In these particulars, the law of Methodism has been *fixed* since 1797; and upon the principle of these constitutions the Conference has never innovated. It is quite true that, in the application and developement of these principles, partial modifications

special kindness and interposition of Divine Providence. By these decisions Mr. Wesley's Deed of Declaration, constituting and defining the Conference, is admitted to be valid in law; the chapels of the Connexion are now secure against the aggressions of unfaithful men; the doctrinal system of Mr. Wesley is ascertained to be under the guardianship of the civil courts, so that if heresy be palmed upon our congregations, they have an instant and easy redress; the pastoral superintendency of the Conference, through the medium of District Committees, is recognised; and the shield of protection is thrown around the entire system."—*Pastoral Address for 1835. Minutes*, vol. vii., p. 598.

have been occasionally adopted. But if we cannot say that all things remain precisely and absolutely as they were in 1797, we can affirm, and in proof of the affirmation boldly appeal to "the statutes at large," (*Minutes, passim*,) that the changes thus introduced have been a gradual extension of popular rights; either a surrender of power on the part of the Conference, or the adoption of additional guarantees for the correctness of its administration.*

In ascertaining, therefore, the *sphere* of Conference legislation, we are bound to strike out, (1.) All those matters upon which the law of Christ is mutually allowed to be decisive; (2.) All those matters which are unalterably fixed and settled by legal enactment; and, (3.)

* "Q. XXIV. What is the judgment of the Conference in reference to the general discipline and government of the Connexion?

"A. Certain novel interpretations of the laws and usages of the body having been recently circulated in different publications, obviously tending to produce faction, and calculated to disturb the peace of our societies, the Conference, whilst it thankfully acknowledges the almost total failure of these attempts, and the settled and peaceful state of the Connexion at large, and of the great majority of the people, even in those few circuits where such efforts have been chiefly made, UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVES AND DECLARES,—

"That it will continue to maintain and uphold the Articles of Pacification adopted in the year 1795, and the Regulations which are arranged under various heads in the Address of the Conference, dated Leeds, August 7, 1797, with the 'Miscellaneous Regulations' which follow them, as hitherto acted upon in the general practice of the body, and explained and confirmed by the decisions of the Conference, recorded in its Minutes of last year, on the dissensions at Leeds: rules which, *taken together*, equally secure the privileges of our people, and the due exercise of the pastoral duties of ministers; and which the Conference regards as forming the only basis of our fellowship as a distinct religious society, and the only ground on which our communion with each other can be continued."—*Anno* 1829. *Minutes*, vol. vi., pp. 512, 513.

All those which have been settled by mutual and solemn compact. Let only this be done fairly and honestly, and it will then be found that every grave and vital question affecting the interests of Methodism is already happily disposed of; and that henceforth the work of legislation must necessarily be confined to some few minor economical arrangements.*

SECONDLY, Another important *fact* to be kept in mind is, that the entire system of Methodism is so constructed as to place the exercise of this authority under that powerful and effective moral control, which must ever prove an effectual and sufficient guard against abuse. If we would not conclude erroneously on this subject, we are bound to consider, (1.) That the Methodist societies are properly voluntary societies. Those who become members of the body do it from choice; and no man who is dissatisfied with its economy can be compelled to remain within its pale. (2.) That not only does the Connexion embody a mass of intelligence, but it is a community in which the Bible is the people's book. Where the Bible is prohibited, and the people are systematically retained in gross ignorance of its contents, a corrupt priesthood may compel submission, or extort compliance, by impious fraud and superstitious terrors. Not so in a state of general and growing intelligence, and where the people

* "The Conference is not, as some writers seem to dream, like a session of Parliament, putting forth numerous acts and statutes, and occupying itself in a large degree in the business of legislation. The rules of the body are fixed; and much legislation would be felt to be an evil. The great business of Conference is, *to carry on the system on its established rules and usages*; and most of its directory minutes are regulations for this purpose, adapted to some change of circumstances, rather than laws, in the proper and commonly received acceptance of that term."—*Watson's Works*, vol. vii., p. 156.

have the Bible in their hands. And to nothing do we more earnestly and affectionately invite our beloved societies, than diligently and prayerfully to "search the Scriptures," on this and every other point connected with their spiritual and eternal interests. And, (3.) That the Methodist Conference enjoys no state provision, or patronage; and has no pecuniary resources but such as it can secure from the voluntary aid of its voluntary supporters. It has no tithes, no rich endowments, nor even the dole of royal bounty to repose on. It has no power to exact compulsory support. The supplies of its ministry *must* be derived from the contributions of a willing people; and, therefore, *can* be secured only by affectionate zeal and Christian fidelity on the part of its ministers.

Let but these things be fairly and impartially weighed, and they will be found to contain a solid security against any material abuse of this and every other branch of ministerial power. Backed by the civil power, secure in the protection of the law, and in the possession of an ample revenue, the government of state churches may become really oppressive and injurious; even when nothing of this kind can possibly occur in churches the terms of whose communion are purely voluntary, and where the sole resources of the clergy are the freewill offerings of the people. This latter is precisely the position of the Methodist Conference. That venerable and grave assembly is much too wise not to know that it can enforce no measure felt to be oppressive or injurious to the members at large, without dissolving the society itself; in which catastrophe, even did no higher, holier principle operate, they know full well that themselves and families would be among the first and greatest individual sufferers.

Besides, public opinion is universally a powerful agent. By its morally compulsive voice, even secular admin-

istrations, though armed with the powers of the dungeon and the sword, have often been compelled to abandon a favourite but injurious line of policy. How much more powerfully public opinion must ever act upon an authority supported by no law, and upheld at every step exclusively by voluntary aid, it cannot be necessary to point out. And yet such *is* the authority of the Methodist Conference. "It is certain," says the learned Dr. Campbell, "that when authority of any kind is unattended with what are commonly called coercive measures, *or the power of the sword*, and unsupported by temporal splendour, or worldly sanctions, it is impossible to preserve it otherwise among an enlightened people *than by purity of character in those vested with it, and by diligence in the discharge of the duties of their station*. In such cases, this is the only foundation on which the respect, obedience, and submission of others can be raised." (*Lectures on Eccles. Hist.*) The truth of this remark is unquestionable; and the impress of this conviction has ever been visibly stamped upon the enactments of the Conference. Nor can it ever be otherwise, so long as that body possesses but an ordinary degree of either piety, or intellect, or even selfishness. Hence it is, that although, as we have proved already, Methodist legislation must necessarily be henceforth confined to the occasional adoption of minor disciplinary regulations, the Conference will not *confirm* even such a regulation, "till after a year's consideration, and the knowledge of the sentiments of the Connexion at large."

So limited is the *extent* of what we have called the legislative authority of the Methodist Conference; so powerful and effective is the *moral control* under which the exercise of that authority is ever placed.

SECTION II.

To present a full view of the case, it is only necessary to add some farther remarks upon the following law of 1797; namely,—

“ It is determined, that if at any time the Conference see it necessary to make any new rule for the societies at large, and such rule shall be objected to at the first Quarterly Meeting of any given circuit; and if the major part of that meeting, in conjunction with the preachers,* be of opinion, that the enforcing of such rule in that circuit will be injurious to the prosperity of that circuit; it shall not be enforced in opposition to the judgment of such Quarterly Meeting, before the second Conference. But, if the rule be confirmed by the second Conference, it shall be binding to the whole Connexion. Nevertheless, the Quarterly Meetings rejecting a new rule, shall not, by publications, public meetings, or otherwise, make that rule a cause of contention; but shall strive, by every means, to preserve the peace of the Connexion.” (*Minutes*, vol. i., p. 376.)

Before we proceed to scan the merits of this law, one word respecting its history. This enactment was preceded by the Plan of general Pacification adopted in the year 1795; a measure which emanated from the Conference, and which demonstrated, on their part, an anxious wish to heal the distractions which then unhappily existed. But though these important concessions were duly appreciated by the mass of the societies, and failed not to produce the happiest effects, something was still wanting to give entire satisfaction. Indeed, a party still existed which clamoured for re-

* Nothing more is intended by “in conjunction with the preachers,” than that the preachers should be present at such a Quarterly Meeting; or, in other words, that the meeting should be *regularly* and *Methodistically* constituted.

volutionary changes, and spared no pains to keep alive the flame of discontent. Such appears to have been the state of things when the Conference assembled at Leeds, in the year 1797. To this Conference, as is well known, delegates from different parts of the country repaired; and between these delegates and a committee of Conference, several points were successively negotiated. One question proposed by the delegates was,—

“How far will the preachers agree, that when the Conference shall make any new rule for the societies at large, provided the travelling preachers find, at the first Quarterly Meeting, that the major part of that meeting, in conjunction with the preachers, are of opinion that the enforcing of such rule in that circuit will be injurious to the prosperity of that circuit, it shall not be enforced in opposition to the judgment of a Quarterly Meeting, till after a second Conference?”

To this the Conference so far acceded as to adopt the above minute; which, as will be seen, is couched in the terms suggested by the applicants themselves. Upon the whole, the satisfaction was mutual and general. The revolutionists now seceded; and carrying with them their rooted and, by defeat, exasperated discontents, have but too generally manifested toward the Conference a spirit of bitter hostility. The following objections to the “minute,” are from a distinguished writer of this party:—

“Any expression of disapprobation is limited, first, as to time; namely, the September Quarterly Meeting.” In consequence of which, it is alleged, “there is not time to form mature views and plans, and to prepare effectual opposition.” In this, however, the Conference is guiltless; the *time* is only limited in the terms of the concession as it had been first limited in the terms of the application. The time allowed is from three to four weeks, on the average; amply sufficient, surely,

for the sober and reflecting part of the community to form its judgment. And as for those whose "plans of opposition" are but so many unhallowed attempts to distract a peaceful circuit, and intimidate its regular authorities, by an organized system of popular agitation, we believe the Connexion at large is fully satisfied that the time allowed is quite sufficient.

"Then the dissatisfaction with any law must be limited, secondly, in extent; for such law is not to be made *a cause of contention*." The truth of the matter, however, is, not that "dissatisfaction" must be *limited* in extent, for who can limit *that*? but that parties dissatisfied must be "limited" as to the violence of their proceedings, and the extent of their efforts to create dissatisfaction where all is peace. If, for instance, an immense majority of our societies are perfectly satisfied with some new regulation, the restless demagogue of some one dissatisfied circuit is *not* to agitate the whole Connexion, either by getting up public meetings, or by circulating inflammatory publications, but to "study to be quiet," and to do "his own business." Surely the writer who can arraign the righteousness of such a limitation as this, must have forgotten, either that such a book as the Bible exists, or that the following *dicta* are among its contents:—"Only by *pride* cometh *contention*.—He loveth *transgression* that loveth *strife*.—Let nothing be done through *strife*.—Where envying and *strife* is, there is *confusion* and *every evil work*.—The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable." Our revered fathers, however, could not lose sight of these things; neither could they forget that, "as coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife."

"And, after all, should any majority of meetings oppose, there is entire liberty reserved to confirm the

law at the ensuing Conference." (*Mr. Allin's Letters*.) Suppose we grant it. To what, after all, does this *liberty* really amount? To what, more than to the liberty of a sane man, either to commit suicide or to act upon the natural, all-powerful principle of self-preservation? To the same objection, urged from a different quarter, Mr. Watson forcibly replies: "Against the decisions of a majority of circuits, (a case which has never occurred,) the 'Guardian,' and all others, may be well satisfied that the law would not be enforced, and could not be enforced, in a society held together by voluntary ties, and deriving no aid, like the national church, from the civil power. That is a case much less likely to occur than that the king should refuse his assent to bills passed by large majorities of both Houses of Parliament; a power in the crown, at which the 'Guardian,' we dare say, is not alarmed; and which, though not alarming, is, nevertheless, important, since cases may arise involving vital principles, the defence of which might be worth even such a struggle as that would consequently induce." (*Works*, vol. vii., p. 153.)

The more seriously we consider this question, the more deeply are we convinced, that when the Conference of 1797 conceded thus much, they advanced to the *ne plus ultra* of either equitable or safe concession. The line of demarcation between right and wrong may be so exquisitely drawn as to be hardly perceptible, when yet the consequences of passing that line are really of incalculable moment. So in the present case. It is true that the law of 1797 does not determine expressly that no new regulation to which a majority of the Quarterly Meetings object, shall ever be confirmed by the Conference; and yet, to stop short of this, more cannot be conceded. Whereas, to have passed this line, had been at once to destroy that balance of power which

equal justice requires to be preserved, and which is really essential to the safety of all. Indeed, the obvious effect of such a step would have been, to bind the Conference in fetters of iron, and to erect the Quarterly Meetings into a really uncontrollable and irresponsible legislative power. That a power of final determination must rest somewhere, is obvious; and, in the present case, there are but two competitors for this distinction, the Conference and the Quarterly Meetings: the former ever under the control of public opinion to an extent to which the latter cannot possibly be: the former, a body of Christian ministers, solemnly invested by the word of God with the spiritual government of the church, and made officially responsible for the church's purity in faith and discipline; the latter, invested with no such authority, placed under no such responsibility: the former making laws only for those upon whose voluntary aid they are continually dependent, not only for the support of their measures, but also for their temporal supplies, and who, on this account, have a most complete and powerful check upon all their proceedings; the latter legislating for those on whom they are really independent, and to whom, therefore, they are *in no way* responsible. Which party has the scriptural right to this distinction, to which in common justice it belongs, and in the keeping of which it is most strongly guarded against any possible abuse, are questions the determination of which we confidently remit to the understanding and the heart of every enlightened and impartial member of the Methodist societies.

Besides, who does not perceive that had the power thus righteously reserved been given up, then every new regulation, grave or trifling, however needful and however salutary, must almost inevitably have become a cause of ruinous contention? In the mass of our

societies, we have the fullest confidence. But there are men to whom every thing will be objectionable which does not originate with themselves; and to whom no enterprise will appear desperate, if it but gratify their restless humour. And as such men would seldom despair of gaining the decisive majority, and therefore would never want a pretext for agitation, their power to scatter and destroy would be fearfully and indefinitely augmented. As the matter now stands, our societies, on the one hand, have the fullest assurance that their just wishes, properly expressed, can never be disregarded; and the lovers of contention, on the other hand, are as fully assured that the clamours of mere faction, however loud and violent, will be resisted to the last. Thus the law secures a fair and calm expression of the sentiments of the Connexion, without furnishing a stimulus, by offering a premium, to agitation; and at the same time, without rendering it at all an *irresponsible* assembly, leaves it in the power of the Conference to deny that to the efforts of a mere faction which is due only to the calm and settled judgment of the community at large.

When we consider, therefore, (1.) The very circumscribed sphere of action to which the authority in question must necessarily be confined; (2.) To what an extent the exercise of this authority must ever be controlled and held in check, by the voluntary principle of our association; and, (3.) How strongly, repeatedly, and explicitly the holy Scriptures enjoin submission to pastoral rule; we feel confident that, vested in the united pastorate of our Connexion, this authority is just where God and nature have placed it; and where the interests of "pure religion and undefiled," as well as every dictate of piety, decorum, and common justice, imperatively demand that it should for ever remain.

SECTION III.

THE necessity of some *tribunal of appeal* in the Christian church has often been deeply felt, and as strongly asserted, by men of different parties and persuasions.* Some writers indeed have gone so far as to maintain, that "a coercive power" is really necessary for the determination of ecclesiastical disputes; and that nothing short of this can ever "cure the distemper." Hence even Stillingfleet speaks with unnecessary contempt of what he calls "that way of *elective synods*, substituted in the place of authoritative power;" and maintains that "the limitation of appeals, extent of jurisdiction, and the binding power of sentence, so far as concerns external unity in the church, is to be fetched from the power of the magistrate, and civil sanctions and constitutions." This, however, manifestly proceeds upon a false view of the case; for so long as ecclesiastical authority is confined within its proper scriptural bounds, coercive power is alike unnecessary and inadmissible. The power occasionally exercised by the apostles, of punishing offenders by the miraculous infliction of corporal diseases and death, is, of course, entirely out of the question. But if so, the power of the church over its own members (for over them that are without it has no power at all) extends no further than to a right to admonish and reprove, authoritatively to rebuke, and, finally, to separate an obstinate offender from the church's communion. It is most certain, therefore, that "the power of the magistrate and civil sanctions" can never be necessary, except for the support of an authority

* *Vide* note, p. 126.

which God has nowhere entrusted to the Christian church.

“Appeals are founded upon natural right, lest men should be injured in any determination of a case by those who have the cognizance of it. And in order to redress of wrongs, and ending of controversies, nature tells us that appeals must not be infinite ; but that there must be some power from which appeals must not be made.” The only instance found in Scripture of an appeal actually made for the decision of an ecclesiastical dispute, is that recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. (Chap. xv.) To this, therefore, attention must be directed. From this instructive narrative it is indisputably certain that, under the inspired guidance of Paul and Barnabas, an appeal was carried from the church of Antioch to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. Surely no farther proof can be necessary to convince the unprejudiced, that an appellate jurisdiction in the Christian church is, at least, both lawful and proper. Neither are we left in doubt as to who, in this instance, constituted the tribunal of appeal. To “the apostles and elders,” and plainly to *them alone*, did the appellants commit the decision of their case.

Founded, therefore, in natural right, sanctioned by Scripture precedent, and strongly recommended by its great and obvious utility, this kind of jurisdiction has always been recognised in Methodism ; and the facility with which our connexional polity admits the effective operation of this principle, we regard as one of the peculiar and solid advantages of the Wesleyan system. In the annual Conference, composed of the united pastorate, “the apostles and elders” of Methodism, this sort of jurisdiction terminates.

As a court of final appeal, the Conference is alike accessible to all: for it is an unquestionable and funda-

mental principle with us, that the paternal ear of the Conference shall at all times be open to the applications of all our people; and especially of all our regular meetings, whether of leaders or trustees. Next to the Conference, in this respect, is an annual District-Meeting; but the authority of this court extends no farther than to the settlement of all such matters as come before it, "until the Conference;" to which any aggrieved party, whether a local meeting, a preacher, an officer, or a private member, has the undoubted right of appeal. The value of this tribunal, however, must not be determined merely by the number and importance of the appeals actually brought before it; but also by the salutary effects of that habitual circumspection and impartiality, which the existence of such an authority naturally induces in every branch of our executive.

It is easy for theoretic writers to frame objections to such a court, or to imagine something more perfect in its kind. But, without setting up any extravagant pretensions on the part of the Conference as to piety, or talent, or experience, or prudence, whoever but fairly considers the constitution of that assembly, its common paternal relationship to the whole Connexion, its independence on merely local and party influence, and its extensive knowledge of Methodist law and usage, will feel no difficulty in conceding to it a respectable competency for the discharge of this important trust. And certainly, its conduct has hitherto been such as to secure for its final decisions the utmost respect from all who desire no more than that right should be done, and that the rule of administration, in all cases, should be impartial justice, guided by sound discretion, and tempered with mercy. Where alleged errors are to be corrected, erroneous judgments to be reviewed, and wrongs to be redressed, to expect such a decision, in every case, as

shall fully satisfy *all* parties, is perfectly idle. And yet we feel confident that those who are every way most competent to judge, and who have had the best opportunities of observing the enlightened and affectionate impartiality with which the Conference has ever exercised this jurisdiction, will be the very farthest from a desire or wish to see it vested in other hands.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XIII.

CHIEFLY to show into what extravagancies passion, when blinded by prejudice, can drive a man, we notice the following:—"Would the people of Great Britain be satisfied to annihilate that branch of the legislature in which they are represented, and leave the work of legislation as the exclusive prerogative of the aristocracy, provided they might be allowed to assist in the execution of the laws so made? Would it satisfy us, Sir, to have laws made without our consent, affecting our persons, our property, and all the conveniencies and rights of social life, provided we might have the exquisite pleasure of obliging the unwilling to obey those laws, however iniquitous they might be? Yet this is the present liberty not only of your private members, but of every class of officers among you; and without their representation in Conference, it is all the liberty they can enjoy." (*Allin*, Let. iv.)

A serious refutation of such mendacities as are contained in the last sentence in this quotation cannot be necessary. The question of representation will be considered elsewhere: and as to "the work of legislation," we may observe, that if "the aristocracy," like the Methodist Conference, were necessarily dependent for their subsistence, and the entire support of their measures, upon the *voluntary aid* of the people; and if, on the other hand, like the Methodist Conference, "the aristocracy" were altogether unsupported by political power, and therefore absolutely unable to enforce their legislative enactments upon any man without his free consent, we believe a vast majority of "the people of Great Britain" would not care a straw, although the work of legislation were consigned to the aristocracy for ever. And certainly, so far as either "the liberties of the people" or the power of their legislators are concerned, they could have no just cause to care; for it is quite manifest that under a civil government, based upon the principles of the Wesleyan polity, the people would be not only absolutely free, but virtually *lawless* too. For a further exposure of this disreputable fallacy, see Part II., chap. iii., of this Essay.

Again: "So long as Conference is supreme, were it to decree that no person should share the privileges of membership without the regular payment of a stipulated sum," (suppose a guinea per quarter,) "no local meeting would have any other liberty than to enforce the law, foolish or even wicked as it might be." (*Ibid.*) True, this writer does not even insinuate that the Conference is *likely ever* to act the enormity here specified; but then he affirms, that "*the abstract possibility* of such a circumstance demonstrates, that *without a voice in the supreme legislative assemblies, the liberties of the people CANNOT be secure.*" (*Ibid.*) We give italics, capitals, &c., just as we find them; but whether the passage quoted is more ridiculous for its sheer absurdity, or censurable from its almost total want of truth and candour, we presume not to decide. And what, after all, is the tremendous evil against which this writer is so anxious to provide? An "*abstract possibility*" that the Methodist Conference may *attempt* a something which they cannot but know to be as preposterous and *impracticable* in itself, as it would be unworthy of their own character for either common honesty or common sense. A very worthy argument for lay-delegation! What can be said of a writer who, in his attempts to alarm the timorous or delude the ignorant, dares not to rely upon what is in any degree *probable*, but thus plunges into the dark and boundless depths of *abstract possibility*, in quest of "gorgons, and hydras, and chimeras dire," to aid him in his vulgar avocation? Can it be necessary to inform this gentleman, that if every mischief that can be proved to lie within the range of *abstract possibility* is to be made a theme of fiery and seditious declamation, and a reason for tearing up the foundations of society, and demolishing existing institutions, the end of all things is at hand? Upon such a resolution of the case, not only must the crown be stripped of its most ancient prerogatives, and the judges of the land divested of their authority; the power of parliament itself must be annihilated, and the Conference of the New Connexion be placed under the ban. It is, at least, an "*abstract possibility*" that, during the very next session of parliament, the queen, lords, and commons, should agree to pass into law an act destructive of the nation's dearest rights.

Must we, therefore, commence the work of revolution forthwith? To what preposterous and terrible results must such a principle, if fairly carried out, conduct its assertor!

And what is the remedy proposed? Of course, *lay-delegation*. This is Mr. Allin's *panacea*. We need not say to any man of ordinary penetration, that this is a remedy which leaves the evil quite untouched; excepting in so far as it aggravates and makes it worse. In the New Connexion, the people already possess this grand security; they have this all-important "voice in the supreme legislative assemblies." Will Mr. Allin affirm that, in point of fact, it is not just as *possible*, and just as *likely* too, that such "a decree" as he mentions should be made in the Conference of the New Connexion, as in the Methodist Conference? He may affirm this, but most assuredly nobody will believe him. "The abstract possibility of such a circumstance" exists as unavoidably and as palpably in one case as in the other; and so far as it "demonstrates" in *one* case it demonstrates in *both*, "that the liberties of the people CANNOT be secure." Let then this writer "show piety a home;" let him, in this particular, devote his patriotic attentions to the body of which he is a distinguished member, before he volunteers them in the service of another. Or let him assign some good and sufficient reason for being so anxious to provide for another people the security which he has never yet provided for his own. The truth of the matter is, that the evil against which he wages war is but the windmill transformed into a giant; and as for the proposed remedy, among all the absurdities that ever found sanctuary in the brain of a madman, what can be more absurd than the idea of providing against "the abstract possibility of such a circumstance" by the introduction of lay-delegates into the Methodist Conference?

The same writer objects, "In Conference, which is your highest legislative assembly, you claim to sit and act alone." (Let. iii.) For this, so far as the representation is just, sufficient reasons will be given elsewhere.

Again: "There you are self-elected, your people having no voice in your appointment." (*Ibid.*) This is not true. It has already been proved, that without the approval of the people

no man can become a minister in our Connexion. And whenever our Quarterly-Meetings approve of the admission of a candidate, they do this with the full and perfect understanding that he is to enjoy all the privileges and exercise all the functions of the Wesleyan ministry, of which this right to sit in Conference is known to be one.

Again: "As you are not bound to consult any class of persons respecting what you shall do, so neither are you responsible to them for what you have done." (*Ibid.*) Of the folly and deceptiveness of this allegation, sufficient proof may be found in the chapter to which these observations are appended. The man is grossly ignorant of the subject who does not know, that by the same motives by which alone a man is "bound" to abstain from leaping into the fire or swallowing poison, the Methodist Conference is "bound" to consult all classes of its societies; and carefully to abstain from every act by which a great, and generous, and enlightened people might be really injured or aggrieved. The man who knows all this, and yet goes on to affirm, as this writer actually does, that the legislative authority of the Methodist Conference is "*absolute, uncontrolled, and irresponsible,*" must possess as little discernment as candour, if he really supposes that a thinking people can be permanently misled by sophistry so transparent, and declamation so idle. Mr. Allin might have known that an authority like that of which we speak, may be as effectually controlled by *a state of things* as by an "order of persons." Indeed, to talk about the "absolute, uncontrolled, and irresponsible" authority of an incorporation whose entire maintenance and very existence depend upon the freewill offerings of a voluntary support, is to talk in the language of real self-contradiction.

Having thus caricatured the power of the Conference, this writer proceeds to give a list of the "subjects" to which this arbitrary, uncontrolled, "and awful authority" extends. Instance: "It is within the prerogative of Conference to fix the salaries of the preachers, and the allowances for their children." (Let. iii.) An assertion more entirely destitute of candour, it is hardly possible for man to utter. The authority of Conference has just been pronounced "exclusive and

absolute;" now it is affirmed to be within the "prerogative of Conference" to fix the salaries of the preachers and the allowances for their children. To deepen the injurious impression, a minute of 1814, which respects not the *amount*, but the *duration* of the children's allowances, and which does not refer at all to the salary of the preachers, is quoted; but the following minute of 1815, which proves the falsity of this whole assertion, is carefully kept out of sight:—

"In future, no new proposal which is designed to effect a general augmentation of the income of the preachers, in the Connexion at large, shall be definitively adopted as a rule, until it shall have received the assent of a majority of the District-Meetings throughout the kingdom, at the time when the financial affairs of the districts are transacted; during which time, according to an existing rule, *the circuit-stewards of every circuit in each district* are to be invited to attend, and shall have a *right to vote* on every such proposal."—*Minutes*, vol. iv., p. 130.

We do not envy the sensibilities of a writer who, in the face of all this, can gravely affirm that "it is within *the prerogative of Conference* to fix the salaries of the preachers and the allowances for their children." The conduct of the Conference, however, in reference to these matters, is sufficiently explained by the *notorious fact*, that most circuits not dependent upon the Contingent Fund, with the entire control of their own finances, voluntarily *fix* both the preachers' salaries and their children's allowances considerably higher than the Conference ever attempted to *fix* them.

The same lamentable disingenuity runs through every member of the following sentence:—"Conference determines the terms of membership; the qualifications of officers; makes laws for the regulation of public worship, and other religious ordinances, schools, &c." (*Ibid.*) How many acts of arbitrary power are intended to be included under this final &c., it is impossible to tell. However, not only "the terms of membership," but the duties of stewards and leaders also were fixed by the Wesleys in 1743, and may be known by a reference to the printed Rules. The sacrament cannot be introduced without the consent of the trustees; nor even with that consent, if such introduction would disturb the peace of the society.

The first article of the Plan of General Pacification provides, that—

“The sacrament of the Lord’s supper shall not be administered in any chapel, except a majority of the trustees of that chapel, on the one hand, and the majority of the stewards and leaders belonging to that chapel, (as the best qualified *to give the sentiments of the people,*) on the other hand, allow of it.”—*Minutes*, vol. i., p. 322.

We have no wish to conceal the fact, that the Conference does, as occasion may require, make regulations for the ordering and conduct of divine service. This, however, it does only in subordination to the above and other long-established general laws. When, therefore, as in the present case, Mr. Allin represents the Conference as if it determined such matters in an arbitrary and absolute manner, he again betrays a very censurable want of candour.

PART THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

HITHERTO our concern has been with *principles* rather than with *systems*; and whilst we have conscientiously endeavoured to elicit the principles of the inspired volume on the important subjects under consideration, and to ascertain in what manner, and to what extent, these divine principles are really adopted and carried out in Methodism, we have, as far as possible, avoided all reference to other systems of church polity. In the very few instances in which other systems have been referred to, we hope this has not been done unfairly; and we are confident it has not been done in any spirit of hostility or unkindness. But there is one system which not only solicits but demands a more particular examination; a system whose unnatural position relative to Methodism is that of direct hostility and avowed rivalry. We need not say that the system here referred to is that of "the Methodist New Connexion." The conduct of this community at a time when "ancient Methodism" was struggling for its existence, we can most readily forgive; but it is too deeply impressed on the memory of thousands to be at once forgotten. In fact, though less activity has been manifested of late, there is but too much reason to believe that the spirit of hostility has been baffled rather than conciliated, and is quiescent rather than extinct. Be-

sides, there are several printed documents in public circulation, and still being circulated, which imperatively require attention.*

The years 1834 and 1835 will ever be memorable in the annals of Methodism. Then it was that attempts the most violent, traitorous, and unprincipled, were made to uproot the very foundations of a system which, during the last century, has, under God, conferred a greater amount of happiness upon mankind than almost any other system upon earth. To Methodism this was really a momentous crisis; and thousands who were so convinced of the justice of her cause as to be ready to perish in the ruins of her anticipated fall, now trembled for her safety. Then it was also, that a Christian minister, a leading minister of the Methodist New Con-

* The Methodist New Connexion is comparatively unknown in some of the most populous parts of the country, though it has now existed for upwards of forty years; and but for the notoriety it has acquired by its unchristian enterprises against "ancient Methodism," its name had probably been still unknown in nine out of ten places to which it has reached. The following account of its origin is from the pen of the late lamented Daniel Isaac:—"A few turbulent spirits, some years ago, agitated the Methodist societies. The burden of their song was, that the preachers were tyrants, and the people suffering the most grievous oppressions; that nothing could save the Connexion but a new constitution, founded upon, what they termed, more liberal principles, &c. The preachers, conscious of their own integrity, and of the attachment of the members in general to the old plan, refused to concede what was so peremptorily demanded. *The friends of the people*, as they styled themselves, separated; formed their new constitution; and invited the people to enter into the glorious liberty of the children of God. It turned out that about one in eighteen joined the New Connexion; so that *one was the people*, and the other *seventeen were nothing at all*. The one had a right to withdraw, if he felt dissatisfied; but he had no right to attempt the imposition of his new yoke upon the necks of his brethren."

nexion, plunged unsolicited into the affray, and fiercely mingled in the unholy strife. So far as his attacks on Methodism are concerned, this writer cannot be more justly characterized than in the language of Scripture, "The name of the star is wormwood;" and the weapons with which he assailed the Wesleyan constitution, were sophisms the most carefully devised, statements the most uncandid, and charges the most unfounded and unjust; the most violent declamation and the bitterest invective. If the result of that painful and perilous struggle has been to attach the Methodists more firmly than ever to their unrivalled institutions, and to fix those institutions themselves upon deeper and more firm foundations, no thanks to those whose cry was, "Rase it, rase it, even to the foundations thereof."*

One of the documents issued at this period by the Rev. T. Allin, is an "Address" to certain Methodist dissentients and agitators, assembled in Manchester, from various parts of the kingdom. From this we must adduce the following extracts:—

"CHRISTIAN BRETHERN,—You, and the various bodies which you represent, have had your eyes opened to the *oligarchical despotism* that governs among the Wesleyans. The eyes of the religious public are turned upon you. The friends of liberty are elate with hope: the abettors of despotism are filled with fear. In your present association, the one see the cloud

* "Methodism, in the vital and essential principles of its polity, was placed at the bar of an earthly judicature; and, without any impeachment of the integrity of the legal profession, or doubts respecting the pure current of British justice, the case was in itself so novel, and the interests involved so truly religious, and deeply interesting to our common Christianity, that, as men professing to believe that 'the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord,' we are compelled devoutly to acknowledge His goodness, and consider our security as from Him."—*Minutes*, vol. vii., p. 598.

of glory placed before the Israel of God, about to shed upon them the light of divine guidance, and destined to lead them from a land where abundant provision has been combined with cruel bondage, to a happier inheritance, in which, together with provision equally rich and plenteous, they will share the immunities of the freed-men of Christ Jesus. But the other behold a cloud portentous and appalling; combining in itself the elements of destruction; and about to involve their usurpation in darkness and ruin. It is only a despotic government of which you complain; and of this you, and myriads more, have grievous cause of complaint. But you may separate the precious from the vile; and while retaining, in their highest perfection and efficiency, all those branches of the Methodistic economy, the results of which have so often gladdened your hearts, you may exchange its oligarchy for a government which, in excellence, deserves to be ranked with the most excellent parts of the Wesleyan economy."

"Such a government already exists; and in the system of the METHODIST NEW CONNEXION, all those religious ordinances and means, to which, as instruments, Methodism is indebted for its success, are associated with a code of laws, which, in clearness and fulness, are not surpassed, if equalled, by any religious denomination in these kingdoms; and with a form of government requiring only to be known, in order to its being esteemed by every true lover of liberty. To enable you to form a correct judgment, a copy of the rules are put into your hands with this address; together with a small tract on the principles and form of government adopted."

"On the assumption, then, that you wish to retain all the excellencies of that system, the widely extended benefits of which you have seen and participated, but to be freed from its despotic power, you may see in the Methodist New Connexion all your wishes anticipated, and your wants provided for. Here are plans of operation well tried and matured; stable institutions; the doctrines, ordinances, discipline, and ministry of Wesleyan Methodism; and these in connexion with *all the liberty* you can desire."

"The step thus urged on your attention, has already been taken by the seceders from the Wesleyans, and by some of the

independent Methodists in the north of England. These, together with the Rev. Joseph Forsyth,* acting on the prin-

* The sequel to this memorable event deserves to be recorded here. Mr. Forsyth, taking with him between six and seven hundred members of the Wesleyan society, (*the fruit of other men's labours*,) joined the New Connexion in the autumn of 1834. His *resignation* is announced in their Minutes for 1838. From his farewell letter to the President, containing "A Minister's Reasons for withdrawing from the Methodist New Connexion Conference," we quote the following:—

"Wicked men, in the church, are able to triumph in their guilt, and to commit iniquity without restraint. Ministers of Christ are made the parasites of designing men, and can only exist in the body while they continue the passive instruments and slaves of their vices. Faithful to God they cannot be, they must not be. They must please men, *wicked men*, and fall in with all their measures and designs, or they must leave the body. For not being sufficiently compliant with the wishes of a few who were members of the New Connexion before we joined it, I have had to stand, for nearly two years, against a mass of intrigue and treachery, falsehood and slander, debauchery and false-swearing, which beggar all description. I have ceased to wonder *why* the New Connexion does not prosper, and *why* such a number of preachers of respectability has left it. He who is of *purer eyes than to behold iniquity*, cannot bless a people who act in such a way. Seeing no possibility of doing His will, nor of being faithful in His church, by whose decision we must stand or fall at last, while subject to the authority of such a Conference, I feel it an imperative duty to withdraw from it, and to stand no longer disgraced before men, and polluted before God, by remaining with a community which can tolerate iniquity.

"I have directed the attention of hundreds of the followers of the dying Redeemer to the Methodist New Connexion: and what is the consequence? They are like sheep among wolves. They were promised *liberty*; but are doomed to be the *slaves of corruption*. They expected the fellowship of *saints*; but find themselves associated with *works of darkness*. They expected assistance in the ways of *life*; but are now to be guided by a carnal policy, which can only lead to inevitable destruction. I have shown them their danger, and must leave them to judge for themselves; *to their own*

ciple that UNION IS STRENGTH, have united, to the amount of *at least nine hundred*, with the Methodist New Connexion; and are now, jointly with the members of that community, giving an impulse to the public mind, and a prominence to liberal views, which cannot but gladden the heart of every enlightened lover of his country and his kind."

The author of the "Address" is likewise the author of "a small tract," &c., *alias*, "An Exposition of the Principles of Church Government adopted by the Methodist New Connexion." This "Exposition" has several claims to a more particular notice. It is the production of a master-mind; and, though "little more than an epitome of principles," it bears the marks of careful thought. It professes to give "a view of the foundations of church government, generally considered, and stripped of that mystery which beclouds and bewilders the understanding;" and even to bring the subject "within the reach of every mind possessing the commonest share of intelligence." Such a production, from such a writer, cannot but be interesting; and it is plainly got up with a design to captivate. Besides, it emanates from one of the highest and most respectable authorities in the Methodist New Connexion, and possesses much of the character of an official document.*

No blame can be attached to this writer for being an

Master they stand or fall. Requesting them and you to ponder these things, I bid you a melancholy and final adieu. (Signed,) Joseph Forsyth. Newcastle, July 14th, 1838."

* In proof of this, we quote the following from the cover of the New Connexion Minutes for 1834: "Shortly will be published, a new and cheap edition of the Rev. T. Allin's Exposition of the Principles of Church Government, adopted by the Methodists of the New Connexion. As this excellent little work is proposed to be sold at *one penny*, it is hoped that friends will order it freely, that its circulation may be extensive."

admirer of Kilham's "Ecclesiastical Platform;" nor ought any one to quarrel with him merely for publishing an "Exposition" of the principles on which that system of church polity is founded. But when the "Exposition" is so contrived as to become an illiberal attack upon the Wesleyan ministers, and a gross misrepresentation of the Wesleyan economy, the subject is fairly open to animadversion. And when it is also considered, that the Expositor has been in the habit of exhibiting his beloved system as containing every thing that is excellent in Methodism, "without its despotic form of government;" that is, in the light of an invidious comparison, and as a rival theory; it is plain that an Essay apologetical, on the constitution and discipline of the Wesleyan body, cannot pass it over in silence. To the writer of the "Exposition" the world is also indebted for certain letters on "the Government of Wesleyan Methodism." To these we have referred already; and they will receive farther consideration as we proceed.

CHAPTER II.

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE NEW METHODIST
POLITY.

PROCEEDING to scan the merits of the EXPOSITION, the first sentence to which we call attention is the following:—"The Methodists of the New Connexion, claiming a common relationship to the founder of Methodism with the Wesleyans, retain the doctrines, ordinances, and general discipline of Wesleyan Methodism." (P. 1.) This claim to "common relationship" is in the highest degree preposterous; and that the phrase "general discipline" requires to be taken in a very limited sense, must be obvious to every one at all acquainted with the subject. Nor can we think this body entitled to much praise for the manner in which it retains "*the doctrines of Wesleyan Methodism.*" In its printed rules these doctrines are but very vaguely and indefinitely stated; and though the Conference is there made to say, "For the illustration of these doctrines, we refer to the first four volumes of Mr. Wesley's Sermons and his Notes upon the New Testament," the fact is notorious, that doctrines palpably contained in the said Sermons and Notes, doctrines which Mr. Wesley to the very last regarded as of most vital importance, have been publicly assailed and openly denounced by one of the most respectable ministers in their entire community; while another as openly maintains, "that all human creeds and standards of religious truth are useless and mischievous."

To discover at once the grand foundations of this system we must quote the Expositor at large.

"Their government is founded upon the following principles:—

"1. Men, as rational and moral beings, have, both in their own persons and in surrounding objects, a property and correspondent rights of which they cannot justly be deprived, except as a punishment for crime, or to secure a greater public good.

"2. The end of government is not the honour or emolument of the governors, but the order and happiness of the governed; or, in other words, the welfare of society at large.

"3. As no one is either infallible in judgment, or absolutely perfect in moral principles and character; and as the possession of absolute power tends both to warp the judgment, and to excite irregular passions, and thus leads to injustice; a government in which the several classes of society are fairly represented is the most likely so to legislate and rule as to harmonize the jarring interests, provide for the diversified wants, and secure the order and happiness of the whole.

"4. If such representation is to be effective, it must exist not only in the inferior courts, but also in the supreme legislative assemblies; securing there that expression to the general voice, and that influence to the general will, without which, neither are the true interests of the society likely to be understood, nor will its liberties be long perpetuated."

Even as regards the true basis of civil government, these principles are essentially *defective*: this must be the case, if any meaning can be attached to such scriptures as Rom. xiii. 1, 2. But when thus posited as the grand basis of pastoral rule and spiritual discipline in the Christian church, these principles deserve a far severer condemnation. We know who has said, "My kingdom is not of this world;" and it is plain that, as a society, the church of Christ differs widely and essentially from every merely civil and political institution. Christ is its law-giver. That no society can exist without government, is admitted; that Christ is King in this society, is not denied. Is it then becoming, is it decent, thus to dispose of the entire question without even the most

distant recognition of *his* authority? Are not Christians, in this respect also, "under a law to Christ?" Is this a matter on which the word of God is absolutely silent? Does the New Testament neither prescribe the *rule* nor suggest the *principles* of order? The man who will affirm this must be very bold. And yet here is a system of church polity based upon four metaphysical abstractions, called "principles," which, collectively or apart, contain not the slightest reference to either the word of God or the authority of Christ.

Connected with the *application* of these principles, there is one sentence which seems to recognise the authority of Scripture: thus, "Though in the church Christ is the supreme Head, or King; though his laws, as given in his word, form that rule of faith and practice from which there lies no appeal, and, therefore, the members of that church are not at liberty to act according to their own will; yet even those laws have to be explained and applied, and, notwithstanding their general clearness and extent, they leave a considerable range for subordinate legislation and government." (P. 2.) To this general representation we shall not now object. Only, if "the church" is a community of which "Christ is the King," and if "*his laws* are given in *his word*," it looks a little odd, and more than a little suspicious, that, in the four great "principles" upon which the New Connexion profess to found "their government," this divine and unappealable authority is no more recognised than if no such authority existed. Again, if the authority of the church extends only to matters of "subordinate legislation and government;" and if that really consists in explaining "the laws of Christ;" it follows, that the higher and first great principles of church government are already *fixed* by divine authority, and that *these principles*, and these alone, are entitled to a place in the

foundation of a system. We cannot but conclude, therefore, that it had been more seemly in "the Methodists of the New Connexion" to have founded "their government" upon those principles of order which are so clearly deducible from the word of God," rather than upon any abstract notions, true or false, of civil liberty or natural rights; particularly when the professed object is, to furnish "a view of the foundations of church government generally considered."

The Expositor flatters himself that he has so managed the subject, that "all classes are enabled to form a tolerably correct estimate of both duties and privileges." This, however, at the very outset, we most solemnly deny. The theory itself is fundamentally semi-infidel; and the exposition is alike bewildering and pernicious. The former either assumes that the Bible is silent upon the subject in debate, or it rejects the authority of the Bible; and the latter, so far from giving any correct idea of Christian duty, is a most partial and unrighteous attempt to explain away, subvert, or neutralize "the commandments of God," upon almost every question of which it treats. As for the single sentence given above, in which the laws of Christ are mentioned, *that* is so manifestly an incumbrance that one cannot but suspect it has been introduced to save appearances; a suspicion not at all weakened by the fact that, in another of this writer's publications, while the four "principles," and the four paragraphs which define the application of these principles to the government of the church, are given nearly *verbatim* from the Exposition, this solitary and perplexing allusion to the authority of Christ is *entirely omitted* !*

* Compare Mr. Allin's Exposition, p. 2, and Let. iv., p. 17; from which it will be seen that the passage in question has been *dropped* out of the middle of the quotation in the latter.

"It is not," says an old writer, "with the church as with other societies, which are first themselves, and then constitute the governors. But the Governor of this society was first himself, and he appointed what orders, rules, and laws should govern this society; and wherein he hath determined anything, we are bound to look upon that as necessary to the maintaining of that society." And an eminent living writer on Christian ecclesiastics, a zealous advocate for unrestricted religious liberty, and an enemy to religious establishments from principle, likewise justly remarks, "The kingdom of Jesus Christ is no political institution; it is a spiritual community founded by himself, the only authority for whose *existence* is in the New Testament records; and whose constitution and laws are to be found *nowhere but there*." (*Wardlaw*.) Another eminent living divine, a staunch American republican in politics, a writer who even affirms that "the form of government established by Moses was *republican*," and that "Christianity is in its essence, its doctrines, and its forms *republican*," most pointedly repudiates the principle assumed as the foundation of this system, thus,—"The church is not a voluntary society, associated upon principles of human invention, but a society divinely instituted, and governed by the laws of her redeeming God and King." (*Dr. Spring on the Bible*.)

Not that we have any objection to fair reasoning, conducted even upon abstract principles; but, again to borrow the appropriate language of Dr. Wardlaw, "but although, for the sake of evincing the perfect accordance of divine institutions with all that is equitable, and all that is expedient, we may *end* with considerations like these, we dare not *begin* with them. We must put the Bible *FIRST*! With the discovery of the mind of God inquiry ends, and obedience commences. It seems one

of the plainest dictates of reason and common sense, that, when a controversy relates to any feature of the constitution of the Christian church, we should look for the settlement of it where alone that constitution can be found. If it is ascertained that we have no authoritative instructions, then, by all means, let us tax our own wisdom for the best constitution we can frame; but if we have, let us beware of the preposterous folly of either leaving them unexamined, or giving the preference to our own inventions." How egregiously the Expositor has sinned against these plainest dictates of sound philosophy and common sense, is too apparent to need pointing out. In fact, he has "built a house upon the sand." Nay, he has done something worse; for, so far as its polity is concerned, he has laid in Zion "another foundation" than that which is laid by the unerring master-hand of the divine Architect.

CHAPTER III.

THE REASONS BY WHICH MR. ALLIN ATTEMPTS TO
JUSTIFY THE ADOPTION OF THE FOREGOING PRIN-
CIPLES AS THE BASIS OF PASTORAL GOVERNMENT.

So much for the principles upon which "their government is founded:" we proceed to notice the manner in which "the Methodists of the New Connexion" apply, and attempt to justify the application of, these principles to the subject under consideration. And here, again, we must quote the Expositor at large:—

"As no one is either infallible in judgment, or absolutely perfect in moral principles and character; and as the possession of absolute power tends both to warp the judgment, and to excite irregular passions, and thus leads to injustice; a government in which the several classes of society are fairly represented is most likely so to legislate and rule as to harmonize the jarring interests, provide for the diversified wants, and secure the order and happiness of the whole."—"These great principles appear to apply as naturally to religious, as to civil society, and refer as directly to the church as to the body politic." Again: "In the church, neither perfect wisdom nor absolute rectitude is found in any particular class of persons, whether pastors or members; therefore, notwithstanding the deference and esteem that are always due to ministers, as the general expounders of the law of Christ, yet they cannot be entitled either to implicit faith or universal obedience. Contrariwise, their liability to err, in judgment and practice, renders it necessary that others should be associated with them, to direct by their counsels, and support by their influence; to prevent decisions by which some might be injured and others disgusted; and to assist in the adoption of such measures as the wants and wishes of the community may

demand. The community, too, having such a property and interest in all its own institutions, possesses an unequivocal natural right to *require* such an association. The right, in fact, exists as perfectly in religious, as in civil society; and may, therefore, be as freely claimed and exercised in the one as in the other. The representative system of government, which, as Britons, we hold so dear, and on which, as we have been made to feel, our civil liberties can alone securely rest, is equally adapted to religious society; and there also presents the surest guarantee against the errors of ignorance, inattention, and prejudice; and the aggressions of covetousness, ambition, and revenge." Finally, "Representation in the church, to be efficient, must be extended to the highest, as well as to the lowest legislative assemblies."

Before we proceed to a more minute examination of these allegations, a general remark or two will be necessary. To talk about "the possession of absolute power," is perfectly idle; and, in the present discussion, can answer no other purpose than to bewilder and mislead. And though to the first of the above sentences, as a maxim of civil government, we have not even the slightest objection, we must adhere to the conviction, that, in the church of Christ, "a government" founded upon those divine principles and rules which are clearly laid down or obviously contained in the New Testament, is much more likely to answer every benevolent design of Him to whom alone belong "the kingdom, the power, and the glory," than even the most plausible scheme of man's imagining.

We mean not to deny that the members of a religious community are deeply interested in the proper administration of its government; and we admit that "the end of government is not the honour or emolument of the governors," but that, in a sound scriptural sense, it is "the order and happiness of the governed." But we deny that, in the present case, either the governors or

the governed are left at perfect liberty to determine what means are really best and most conducive to this end. "The ultimate end of our pastoral oversight," says Baxter, "is that which is the ultimate end of our whole lives; even the pleasing and glorifying of God: and the nearer ends of our office are, the sanctification and holy obedience of the people of our charge; their unity, order, beauty, strength, perseverance, and increase; and the right worshipping of God, especially in the solemn assemblies." What is most acceptable to God, the Scriptures must determine; and as to the means best calculated to promote these holy objects of our ministry, every consistent believer in divine revelation must allow, that what the word of God approves and sanctions, is both the wisest and the best. To this tribunal we appeal; and by its inspired decisions fearlessly we stand, however they may appear to clash with merely human maxims.

The characteristic feature of the church government adopted by the New Connexion, as opposed to the Wesleyan polity, is its vaunted system of *lay-representation*. And the ground taken by Mr. Allin is plainly this, that on the very same principles and for the same reasons that, as Britons, we claim to be represented in Parliament, the members of a New Connexion or of a Wesleyan society may claim a *lay-representation* in Conference. So far as Methodism is concerned, the point chiefly contended for is, the introduction of lay-delegates into what are called "the highest legislative assemblies" of our religious Connexion. In admiration of that form of civil government under which we live, we will not yield to Mr. Allin himself; but that the representative system for which this writer contends is either as *necessary* or as *natural* in a Christian church as in the body politic, we totally deny; and shall now

proceed briefly to examine the argument by which he has attempted to support his allegation.

The power of civil governors is alike supreme, secular, and coercive; so much so, that, to use the language of South, "without coercive power, all government is toothless and precarious." Granting, therefore, that the representative form of government contains the "surest guarantee" against the aggressions of this most formidable power, still the entire argument of the Expositor, on this point, is vicious and inconclusive from first to last; for it necessarily involves one or the other of the following absurdities; either it assumes that there is no difference between the merely spiritual and uncoercive authority of a pastor over a voluntary society of Christians, and the irresistible coercive power of the civil magistrate over the nation at large; or it assumes that the proper safeguards against the abuse of this coercive power are *as natural* and *as necessary* where no such power exists, as where it does exist in all its fearful and resistless energies; either of which assumptions is too absurd to need a serious refutation or exposure. However, for the sake of those whose simplicity or whose perverseness may require "line upon line," we offer a few additional remarks.

We deny, then, first, that the species of interference contended for is "as natural" in a Christian church as in the body politic. And whilst we contend for a spiritual authority in the Christian pastor, we must insist that the questions of pastoral and civil government are so entirely dissimilar, that they cannot be argued upon the *same* principles. The pastor has no civil jurisdiction; the magistrate has. The relation in which the members of a Christian church stand to those who are "over them in the Lord" does not resemble that of a servant to his master, nor that of a subject to his prince, but rather

that of a child to an affectionate parent. Who constitute the members of our societies? Generally speaking, those who have been reclaimed from sin and error into the ways of God and holiness, by our ministry: they are the fruit of our labours in the Gospel of Christ; and to those labours, under God, they owe their dearest comforts and their brightest hopes. "God forbid that *we* should glory." But we do maintain that this places a minister of Christ in a relationship to the people of his charge which is essentially different from any relationship that can subsist between civil governors and those who are governed by them; and which gives him a *kind* of influence and authority which civil governors have no right to claim.

Such was manifestly the judgment of an inspired apostle. Writing to Philemon, St. Paul says, "I beseech thee for *my son* Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds." Again, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I will repay it; albeit I do not say to thee how *thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.*" Nothing could more finely exhibit the true spirit of that relationship which naturally subsists between minister and people. And let it be observed, that though the apostle delicately declines to use authority in this case, he as delicately reminds Philemon that he might have used authority: "Though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee, yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee." And to what does Paul refer in this instance, as giving him such an authority? Plainly not to any extraordinary power possessed by him as an apostle, but to the interesting fact that Philemon, as well as Onesimus, owed his conversion to him as a minister of Christ: "Thou owest unto me even thine own self besides." Since, therefore, the Christian pastor possesses no civil jurisdiction, and

since there properly belongs to him a kind of authority essentially different from that which pertains to civil governors, to insist upon framing the government of a Christian church strictly upon the frigid, selfish maxims of civil government, is most unnatural.

Secondly, According to the above reasoning, it is the absence of "perfect wisdom" and "absolute rectitude" in the ministry, which renders it *necessary* that "others should be associated with them" in the discharge of their functions. But, unfortunately for the argument, even should these *others* be thus associated with the ministry, the same necessity must still exist; and by this very expedient may very possibly, and will not at all improbably, be seriously aggravated rather than relieved. In the Conference of the New Connexion, the laity are already thus associated with the ministry; and yet, much as the Expositor may admire the constitution of that body, he will not affirm that it possesses either "perfect wisdom or absolute rectitude." If the absence of such perfection be a reason for adding *laymen* to the Wesleyan Conference, it may be quite as good a reason for adding *women* to the Conference of the New Connexion. But, in truth, it can never be proved that this latter assembly, as a whole, is either more upright, or more wise, or more impartial than it would be if it consisted of one class only; nor is it by any means certain that the body is not materially worse in all these several respects, in consequence of this very association.*

* We look upon this policy as the bane of the New Connexion; the grand secret of its moral impotency. It is an arrangement which annihilates the legitimate powers of the Christian ministry; and with this the consciousness of a real personal responsibility in ministers. The following remarks are from a highly respectable minister in Lady Huntingdon's Connexion:—"Wesley had the

The principal question with regard to such an association is this, Is it compatible with the scriptural character of the pastoral office thus to render a part of the church *co-ordinate* with the pastor? Methodism affirms that it is NOT; and, therefore, rejects such an association. And under the term Methodism here, we include the legal constitution and entire economy of the body, together with the general intelligence, the piety and influence of the Connexion at large, as well as the Conference. But even if this question were decided in

penetration to know that men will never do any thing great, so long as they are dependent upon others; and the magnanimity to allow his successors to project their own measures, and to feel a personal responsibility for their own attempts. All must admire his foresight in the constitution of a Conference, which should come into real legal operation at his death. Unhappily for the spread of the other section of Methodism, it has generally adopted a *trustee* superintendence: this system, as far as the extension of the general cause is concerned, has not worked well; it has created a legal authority which may be opposed to the moral and ecclesiastical power; it has crippled the energies of ministers, or removed them to other spheres; and by making them feel that, excluded in a great degree from responsible management, they acted a subordinate part, it has paralysed talent which ought to have been kept healthy by exercise, and to have been encouraged in every legitimate attempt at proselyting mankind to the faith.

“The *Wesleyans*, on the other hand, conscious of personal responsibility as to their own executive power, have been *roused to action*, and have almost become a Parliament in council, while they give an impulse to all the assemblies which they direct and edify. ‘Use talent and have talent,’ has been beautifully illustrated in this remarkable people. Had their founder placed his ministers under the control of a few lay or clerical trustees, Wesleyan Methodism would exhibit a very different front from that it now presents.” (*Life and Times of Selina Countess of Huntingdon*. Introd. to vol. ii., by Rev. J. K. Foster.) Mr. Foster speaks in reference to the *Calvinistic* section of Methodism; but his reasoning applies with even still greater force to the policy of the New Connexion.

favour of Mr. Allin, it would still be a point for grave consideration whether, as a matter of human policy, the association for which he contends would at all abate the evils which it is designed to cure. Adding to the classes of which the body is composed, does not necessarily add either to its wisdom or its rectitude. If impartiality or integrity is wanted, even that does not necessarily result from such an expedient. If greater competency is the desideratum, the case is clearer still; for when a man does not possess abilities equal to the task imposed upon him, it is necessary, not only that others should be associated with him, but also that these others should be more wise and competent than himself.

Thirdly, The above reasoning proceeds upon an *infidel estimate* of the ministerial character. Good men, we grant, are not impeccable; but if the Expositor speaks correctly, then certain it is, that the ministry, *de facto*, is not a scriptural ministry, but one that ought not even to be tolerated. For as certainly as the "surest guarantee against the aggressions of their covetousness, ambition, revenge," is to be found in this species of *lay-interference* in the exercise of their office, so certain it is that there can be "no fear of God before their eyes;" to say nothing of that holy, self-denying love to God and man, without which it must ever be criminal for any "to take part in this ministry." Thus, at the very outset, in order to make out a plea for lay-delegation, Mr. Allin assumes that the Christian pastorate are, in point of character and principle, not what the word of God and their own most solemn professions imperatively require them to be, but what they are frequently represented to be by the lowest class of infidel writers; not scriptural shepherds, but "grievous wolves." And yet the advocate has assumed no more than is really necessary

for the defence of his client. But the plea is as absurd as it is unrighteous. For where such *really is* the character of the ministry, lay-delegation is not the proper remedy; and where such *is not* the character of the ministry, lay-delegation is alike undefended and indefensible.

Fourthly, The manner in which Mr. Allin employs the terms "the church," and "the body politic," is grossly deceptive. The body politic is *one* and undivided; it can have but one head, to which every member must submit. Any attempt to form an *imperium in imperio*, to erect a separate and independent civil government within the realm, would be condemned as treason and rebellion. "The church," in the only sense in which it can be opposed to the body politic, may include any number of church governments, separate and equally independent. But, in fact, "the church" nowhere exists which, in the terms of an argument, can be opposed to the body politic. To use these terms, therefore, as this writer uses them, is to practise a gross deception upon the unwary reader.

If in religious as in civil matters, but *one* form of government could be tolerated in the realm, the case would be essentially different. But how does the matter really stand? Why, we have forms of government, as well as forms of faith, suited to almost every possible variety of taste. Here we have what Mr. Allin courteously designates "the oligarchical despotism that governs among the Wesleyans:" there, the New Methodist republic, with its "stable institutions, and with a form of government requiring only to be known in order to its being esteemed by every true lover of liberty;" and under whose peaceful shadow "all have equal liberty and equal rights." And here is our Expositor, or at least some of his friends, ever ready to put "a copy

of the rules into your hand, together with *a small tract* on the principles and form of government adopted ;” and to assure you that in this “dwelling-place of true liberty,” you will find, not only “an asylum for the oppressed,” but “all the advantages of Methodism without its despotic form of government ; all your wishes anticipated ; all the liberty you can desire.” How many systems lie within these two extremes, combining in their institutions every conceivable proportion of wisdom and folly, of liberty and bondage, of good and evil, it cannot be necessary for us to ascertain. But surely, in such a state of things, no conscientious worshipper of God can long be at a loss to find a church with which he may unite. And whilst every man is left amidst this rich variety, entirely free to choose what pleases him the best ; whilst perfectly as free at any time to reject a former choice in favour of something else more suited to his present humour, we see nothing so very *tyrannical* in the requirement, that those who, for their own advantage, choose to belong to our community rather than to any other, shall, in general, “not *mend* our laws, but keep them for conscience’ sake.” Because every man who joins a religious society, thereby voluntarily pledges himself to observe the rules of that society ; and if the members of our societies have had no share in framing the constitution of Methodism, they have, from choice, adopted it as it is ; and though they cannot be gratified with the mischievous device of a *lay-representation*, they have,—that is, in the voluntary principle of our union, the unalterable provisions and established laws of the Connexion, the tried character, the Christian integrity, the unsullied honour, and the paternal affection of the Wesleyan Conference,—they have “*the surest*,” and, in fact, THE ONLY SCRIPTURAL “guarantee,” for a constant, kind, and prompt attention to whatever

concerns the comfort and salvation of individuals, combined with the spiritual welfare of the community at large.

Therefore, if Mr. Allin could prove what he has not yet been able to prove, namely, that some advantages must result to the members of a religious body from their being represented, upon *his plan*, in the legislative assemblies of that body, we should still deny his assertion that "the *right* exists as *perfectly* in religious as in civil society." For this the reasons are too obvious not to be at once perceived. First, The enactments of the national legislature are the laws of the *empire*, necessarily and equally binding upon every subject in the realm; whereas the laws of any religious community can bind only so many as may choose to be bound thereby. Secondly, However harsh the enactments of the state may be, the subject is ever liable to be *coerced* into submission: the members of a religious society are perfectly exempt from such coercion. And, thirdly, Every member of the state is, upon the same principle of civil coercion, *obliged* to support its various institutions. Taxed to an amount however grievous, the subject is compelled to pay. The governors of a religious society are dependent upon *voluntary* aid. If the civil government were made really responsible for the safety, order, and defence of the nation, but left entirely dependent upon "the voluntary principle" for its *supplies*, we apprehend this one simple arrangement would invest the governed with quite as powerful a check upon the covetousness, ambition, and other vices of their governors, as they now have in the representative system. And while Christian ministers are left totally dependent upon the voluntary contributions of their voluntary supporters, there is little danger of their becoming despots; however loudly Mr. Allin may continue to declaim about "priestly domination and tyranny."

In fact, one principal part of the "Exposition" is but an unworthy attempt to confound religion with politics; to obliterate the distinction between those high, and holy, and generous principles, upon which Christ has founded the pastoral government of his church, and the narrow, grovelling, and selfish principles which constitute the policy of this world; and to delude the simple into plans of mischief and rebellion, by the slang of political agitators. But the attempt is an abortion. The reasoning is founded upon analogies which nowhere exist; and the argument is rendered even ridiculous by the entire absence of all just proportion or resemblance in the things compared. "The power of Parliament," says an eminent jurist, "is so transcendent and absolute, that it cannot be confined, either for causes or persons, within any bound;" it has "sovereign, uncontrollable authority in matters of all denominations, ecclesiastical or temporal, civil, military, maritime, or criminal." (*Blackstone*.) Now where is the analogy between a legislature armed with these tremendous powers over the property, liberty, and even life of every subject in the realm, and enforcing its decisions by the civil sword, and a company of Christian ministers assembled to form occasional regulations for the spiritual rule and improvement of so many as may choose to put themselves under their pastoral care and superintendence? The absurdity of a comparison here, is most complete. Yet such is one of the "strong grounds" on which Mr. Allin affirms that *the right* to representation "exists as *perfectly*" in one case as in the other; and on which he has attempted to prove that the reasons which require the adoption of the representative form of civil government, apply as naturally to religious as to civil society, as directly to a Christian church, as to *the* body politic!

CHAPTER IV.

LAY-DELEGATION PROVED TO BE UNNECESSARY, AND, THEREFORE, UNJUSTIFIABLE UPON ANY PRINCIPLE OF SOUND CHRISTIAN EXPEDIENCY.

WE shall now proceed to demonstrate that the species of lay-interference which Mr. Allin so imperiously requires us to admit, is not at all *necessary* to the attainment of its professed objects; that is, to secure to the members of our societies "the direct personal interest" which they have "in the ministry they support, the places of worship they build, the doctrines they hear, and the ordinances they share." The existence of such an interest we most readily admit; but we maintain that the Methodists already possess the most ample and complete security in all these several respects; and that *to them*, therefore, lay-delegation would be an *useless thing* at best.

It is a well-known fact, that every candidate for the Wesleyan ministry must be approved by the Quarterly Meeting of the circuit in which he lives. This meeting is the meeting of the people; and it has power to reject any candidate of whose fitness for the work it is not fully satisfied. Not only so; for if, in any case, "the majority of the trustees, or the majority of the stewards and leaders, of any circuit, believe that any preacher appointed for their circuit is immoral, erroneous in doctrine, deficient in abilities," &c., they have full power to call a meeting for the trial of that preacher. In the meeting thus called, "all the trustees, stewards, and leaders of that circuit" are entitled *to vote*; and if

a majority of that meeting find the accused preacher guilty, or the complaint valid, he is to be considered "as removed from that circuit." And "if any preacher refuse to submit to the above mode of trial, he shall be considered as suspended until the next Conference." (*Minutes*, vol. i., p. 324.) On these points, at least, we are bold to speak with the enemy in the gate. Wesleyan Methodism guards the morality of its ministers with a strictness bordering even upon severity; and makes it morally impossible for them to introduce "false doctrines and heresies."

Then, with regard to the *places of worship* erected by the Wesleyan body, the mode of settlement strongly and universally recommended by the Conference, renders it legally impossible for any party to divert them from the uses for which they were originally intended, or to introduce into them either a corrupt worship or doctrines at variance with the pure word of God, as explained in the writings of Mr. Wesley. In all these great concerns, likewise, the Wesleyan Methodists have a security to which, most certainly, nothing could be added by the sorry expedient of lay-delegates in Conference.

Mr. Allin affirms that "the *members* form that community to which the temporal goods, the religious ordinances, and both the offices and the officers of the community belong, or for the benefit of which all were instituted." That the religious ordinances of a Christian community were instituted for the "benefit" of the *members* of that community, though by no means for them exclusively, is granted; and it has been proved, and will again be proved, that the Wesleyan constitution, without the intervention of lay-delegates, does most sacredly and inviolably secure to the members of that body every "benefit" they can have a right to expect. But when this writer affirms that, *to the*

members "the religious ordinances and both the offices and the officers" *belong*, his language is much better calculated to delude than to instruct; and it certainly implies much more than can be scripturally granted. Had the expression been used *populariter* merely, it might have been allowed to pass; but when it is made one of the principal terms of an argument which is supposed to give the lay-portion of a religious society a right to dictate in all matters relating to spiritual office and officers, it certainly requires to be examined.

Now, according to Mr. Allin, the highest *office* in the church is that of the ministry; the highest class of *officers*, the ministers. How, then, does this office *belong* to the members of the Christian church? Did they institute, or can they abolish it? Have they power to add unto, or diminish from, the essential duties of that office? The officers, too, it is said, *belong* to the members. We do not deny this, in a subordinate sense; "for we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." But in the sense in which this writer *affirms*, we must *deny* the proposition. To speak strictly and properly of *the office*, it is "the ordinance of God;" of the *officers*, "they are God's ministers." The *essential* duties and responsibilities of the ministerial office are clearly of divine obligation; permanent and unchanging, however popular opinion may vary. Whether the people censure or approve, for these ministers are accountable to God; and, being entrusted with this ministry, they must study to "obey God rather than man." Such is plainly the scriptural view of this important question: "As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing MEN, but GOD, who trieth our hearts." (1 Thess. ii. 4.) Let Christian ministers, indeed, be ever willing to spend and to be spent in the

service of the church, and ever ready to "please all men for their good to edification;" but let them remember that it is from God they have received "a dispensation of the Gospel;" and that if, either on account of popular clamour excited for party purposes, or to gratify a different humour, they consent to sully the purity or impair the efficiency of their office, they betray the highest trust that God has ever yet confided to mankind, and must answer it "to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead."

Again, what does Mr. Allin mean when he affirms, that it is to the members that the *temporal goods* of the community *belong*? In every usual acceptation of the terms, the assertion is both mischievous and false; but as it involves another of those "great principles" upon which the polity of the New Connexion is founded, we must examine it briefly. This gentleman is well known to be one of those liberal writers, who invidiously represent the Wesleyan ministers as a body of men whose interests are directly opposed to the interests of their people. According to the slang of this party, Methodism is a state in which "the priests are tyrants, the people slaves." When they speak of the *members* of the community, it is in opposition to its ministers. And with the laudable design to enlighten our people on the subject of their grievances, they are kindly assured that "the temporal goods" of the Wesleyan community *belong* to them. How generous! But how false, how mischievous, how obviously *ad captandum*! True, it was the ministerial labours of the preachers which called the chapels into existence; true, it may have been by their labours chiefly that subscriptions were obtained; true, large subscriptions have been obtained, not only from *members* of our own community, but also from strangers; and no less true, that the preachers themselves may

have contributed as large an amount of money as any equal number of members taken in the aggregate; all this is undeniable: still we are given to understand that *we* have no right or interest in these things; and that, in fact, it is merely upon sufferance that we are allowed to occupy, the members being that body to which “the temporal goods of the community *belong*.” Of course, we are to understand, that *should they* think proper to turn us out, or to alienate the chapels to the use of another denomination, we have no right to complain.

As it is a favourite device with a certain class of writers, to persuade the uninformed and unreflecting among our people that the ecclesiastical property of the Connexion belongs of right to them, but has been, in fact, seized upon by the Conference, it will be proper to glance at the thing as it really is, when divested of “that mystery which beclouds and bewilders the understanding.” Be it then observed, that our CHAPELS, which are here the principal consideration, are built partly by subscription, partly by monies borrowed upon the security of the trustees. They are erected for the service of WESLEYAN METHODISM. Fully to secure the ends contemplated in their erection, these chapels are settled upon trustees by a legal instrument called a Trust Deed. In this instrument, *three classes of rights* are distinctly recognised or effectually secured:—

First, The rights of the preachers.—These are, a right to occupy the pulpit, to preach God’s holy word, to administer the sacraments, and to conduct divine service in the chapel. These are the rights of the preachers; but theirs only so long as they live a holy life, remain in the Wesleyan Connexion, submit to the Wesleyan discipline, and preach the pure word of God, as explained in the writings of Mr. Wesley. Only in this sense, and upon these conditions, does the property *belong* to them.

Secondly, The rights of the trustees.—They have power to prevent the pulpit from being occupied by any preacher who is either “immoral, erroneous in doctrine, deficient in abilities,” or who refuses to submit to Wesleyan law and discipline; but not to eject a minister who has been Methodistically appointed, until proved to be Methodistically disqualified for holding his appointment. The trustees likewise manage all the temporal concerns of the chapel. They are the legal guardians of the property; the parties legally qualified to receive and to disburse pew-rents, &c. They, however, have no power to apply these funds, nor any part of them, to their personal use. It is easy, therefore, to see in what sense the property *belongs* to them. In respect of *property*, the trustees have no more personal or private estate in the chapels than the preachers have. They are property from which neither party can derive any pecuniary benefit.

Thirdly, The rights of the people.—These are, a right to have the pure word of God, as explained in the writings of Mr. Wesley, faithfully preached in their chapels; to have the holy sacraments properly administered to them, and the various parts of divine service regularly conducted, by men who are both scripturally and Methodistically qualified for the work. So long as these great ends are properly secured, no right of the people is violated, no right is touched. It cannot, therefore, be difficult to ascertain in what sense the property *belongs* to them. They, of course, have no more personal right to the chapels, considered as property, than either the preachers or the trustees.

In “the places of worship they erect,” the preachers have rights, the trustees have rights, the people have rights. And the Wesleyan mode of settlement most justly and effectually secures the whole; puts it out of the

power of any one party to endanger the rights of another ; and certainly gives neither preachers nor trustees any power that is incompatible with the strictest security to the rights of the people.

As to the places themselves, they are properly *res sacræ* ; not, strictly speaking, the property of any *party*, but things solemnly devoted by our own and by our fathers' piety, to God, and to the purposes of "pure religion and undefiled." Thousands of those who have thus devoted a portion of their substance now "rest from their labours;" and the highest justice that can be done to such property is, to secure its permanent and faithful application to these sacred ends. A gift is a gift; and what I have given to the support of Wesleyan institutions, I have given. A subsequent change of mind in the donor involves no right, either to recall the gift, or to require its application to purposes alien from those originally contemplated. And fearlessly do we challenge Mr. Allin to point us out the religious community which, either for the piety and integrity of "the ministry they support," the purity and uncorruptedness of "the doctrines they hear," or the appropriation of "the places of worship they build," exclusively to the high and holy purposes for which they build them, gives its members *security* equal to that which is enjoyed by the WESLEYAN METHODISTS. That the Methodists of the New Connexion have any such security, it would be idle to pretend. Just as certain it is that, with any view to the improvement of this security in the Wesleyan body, the lay-delegation scheme is not only useless but absurd. Even could it be adopted, the only possible result of such an innovation is, that it *might* peril what is at present beyond the reach of danger.

CHAPTER V.

LAY-DELEGATION PROVED TO BE AN ENCROACHMENT ON THE SCRIPTURAL RIGHTS OF THE PASTORAL OFFICE, AND, THEREFORE, UNCHRISTIAN AND UNLAWFUL.

WE shall now demonstrate that the system advocated by Mr. Allin is *directly subversive of the order of God* as established in the New Testament. Speaking of this portion of the inspired volume, the Expositor says, "It is indeed true, that ministers are there denominated pastors, overseers, shepherds, and rulers." He adds, however, "But then it is likewise true, that neither, on the one side, are ministers thus vested with the *exclusive* right to judge of the meaning and applicability of the law; nor, on the other, are the churches laid prostrate at their feet, being bound by divine authority to receive all their teachings as true, and to submit to all their decisions as just." And again, "Notwithstanding the deference and esteem that are always due to ministers, as the general expounders of the law of Christ, yet they cannot be entitled either to implicit faith or universal obedience."

The question, however, is not, Are ministers "entitled to implicit faith and universal obedience, and vested with the exclusive right to judge of the law of Christ?" Neither is it, Are "the churches laid prostrate at their feet, bound by divine authority to receive all their teachings as true, and to submit to all their decisions as just?" All this is entirely out of the question; and Mr. Allin *knows* that it is so. The real question is, Are the pastor and his flock, the rulers and the ruled, *co-ordinate*?

Are they one and *equal*, in office, power, responsibility? Scripture, reason, and common sense, alike affirm that these different parties are not, and *cannot be*, thus co-ordinate. And the Expositor who so distinctly admits that, in the New Testament, ministers are denominated rulers, will not deny that the following scripture is addressed to the churches:—"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give account." How far the authority of the spiritual ruler extends, or how far the churches are commanded to *obey* him, we need not now inquire: these points we have discussed elsewhere. But we proceed to demonstrate, that the scheme of which Mr. Allin is the advocate makes the pastor, at best, but co-ordinate with a part of his flock: whilst, in many instances, it lays this divinely-constituted ruler "prostrate at the feet" of those whom the Scriptures command to *obey* him; and binds that ruler "to submit to all their decisions," however unscriptural and unjust; and that, therefore, it is a violent outrage upon the first and plainest principles of the Christian economy as established by Christ.

For the first proof of this, let us accompany the senior pastor of a circuit and his popularly elected lay-associate to the New Connexion Conference. In this grave assembly and its proceedings, what is the difference between the most venerable minister and the rawest lay-delegate? What authority has the former that the latter has not? None. What power, or right, or privilege does the former exercise above the latter? None. Where is the distinction which God has put between the pastor and the flock, the ruler and the ruled? It has vanished. If such a distinction is recognised at all in the New Connexion, it is never allowed to appear in the Conference. Thus an ecclesiastical distinction, confess-

edly divine in its origin, and broadly sanctioned by inspired authority, is totally annihilated; or by solemn interdict is for ever denied admission into this professedly ecclesiastical assembly. Nay, it is even quite clear that so long as lay-delegates are thus admitted into this assembly, the order established in the New Testament must necessarily be shut out.

Do we misrepresent the matter? Not at all. In proof of this, we adduce the following paragraph *verbatim* from the "Exposition:"—

"The Conference, which is the highest legislative body, is composed of the officers of the Connexion, as the treasurer, &c.; the superintendent preachers from the respective circuits, as those who are particularly responsible for the order of the circuits, and the execution of the laws of the Connexion; and one lay-representative from each circuit, who is freely chosen by the people, as the direct organ of their wishes, and whom they can specially instruct respecting any measure with which, in their judgment, the prosperity of religion, and the welfare of the societies are connected. In this assembly, too, as in the others, *all have equal liberty and equal rights.*" (Page 8.)

Is it even so? Then, taking our stand upon the plainest declarations of holy Scripture, we affirm that either the pastor is degraded from his scripturally defined *official rank*, or the lay-delegate is *out of his place*. For priestly despotism we would scorn to plead. We "honour all men," but "every man in his own order." For the same reasons that the spiritual pastor is judged to be disqualified for engaging in commercial speculations and schemes of worldly aggrandizement, the layman ought *to feel* himself disqualified for such a participation in the proper functions of the spiritual pastor. To the laity we cheerfully concede even a principal part in manag-

ing the temporal concerns of the church, and so much control in its spiritual administration as is really necessary to prevent the abuse of ministerial power; but when we find lay-domination thus occupying the high places of the sanctuary, and thus co-ordinated with the pastoral authority in the discharge of functions purely spiritual, we are compelled to regard it as, “το βδελυγμα της ερημωσεως εστως εν τοπω ἁγίῳ,” as the unwarrantable intrusion of a baneful and desecrating secular influence, into the very *sanctum sanctorum* of pastoral administration.

For the second proof of our assertion, let us accompany the pastor to the Quarterly Meeting of his circuit. Besides managing the general affairs of the circuit, these meetings may be said to constitute the *de facto* legislature of the New Connexion. The general rules provide, that “before any fundamental law affecting the whole body is repealed or altered, the Conference shall take the sense of the Quarterly Meetings, and afterwards *determine accordingly*.” So that a majority of the Quarterly Meetings do, in fact, *decide* the question; and the following Conference declares how it has been decided, and gives its formal sanction. The Conference is composed of a tolerably equal proportion of ministers and laymen; not so the Quarterly Meeting. Here the physical and numerical superiority is tremendously against the pastor; that is, in a *ratio* of perhaps twenty, perhaps only ten to one. And be it remembered, that this *beau ideal* of a *liberal* constitution, supplies the pastor with no defence against this overwhelming superiority; no power of office to protect himself or others against either the *errors* of its “ignorance, inattention and prejudice,” or the *aggressions* of its “ambition, covetousness, revenge.” He may advise, entreat, complain, and deprecate; but of the power that must *decide*, he has only just so much as

is possessed by any one of the many who represent the other side of the question.*

In his Leaders'-Meeting, the case of the pastor is only altered for the worse. It is the province of this meeting, to "fix the hours for the celebration of public worship, take charge of the proper order and conducting of such worship, and *superintend* the various other religious ordinances and services; to determine on the admission and expulsion of members, and regulate all other concerns which appertain to the society." (*Gen. Rules*, p. 6.) Here, again, the pastor is entirely stripped of his *scriptural* authority; those solemn duties for which the word of God holds *him alone* responsible are undisguisedly put into commission; and he himself is "laid prostrate" at the feet of some ten, twenty, or thirty lay-governors, to whose decisions, right or wrong, he must submit. Over the appointment of the members of this meeting he has no control, he has no power of office to set against its vast numerical and physical superiority. Should this meeting be ever so factious, ignorant, wayward, and corrupt, in every contest that lies within this sphere, he can only implore, and deprecate, and, finally, submit to whatever his "many masters" may be pleased to ordain. And yet this is the system which, "with the enlarged spiritual views, religious ordinances, and wholesome discipline" of Wesleyan Methodism, "combines a mode of government that secures order without despotism, and liberty without licentiousness; *the efficiency of the ministry*, (!) and the privileges of the people." Yes, this is what Mr. Allin complacently denominates, "the dwelling-place of true liberty!"

In ascertaining the business and functions of the above meetings, we have quoted the "General Rules" of the

* See note (D) at the end of this chapter.

body; and in confirmation of the above remarks, we once more quote the Expositor:—

“In the Leaders’-Meetings, at which all the concerns of particular *societies* are arranged, the leaders of the classes, and the society-stewards, are associated with the preachers, and are entitled *equally with them* to a judgment and a vote on every matter discussed. In the Quarterly Meetings, in which the general concerns of the *circuits* are managed, the circuit officers, as stewards, &c., and the representatives of the several societies, chosen by them, are connected with the preachers, and have *an equal voice with them* in every thing done.” (Pp. 7, 8.)

To go back, then, to the Leaders’-Meeting. “The admission and expulsion of members” are matters than which nothing can more deeply affect the conscience of the faithful pastor. That the Leaders’-Meeting should have power to prevent the admission of *improper* persons, and to prevent the expulsion of the innocent, we will grant. But since *he* must “give account” of all the souls for which he is appointed to watch, the pastor ought to be equally protected in the discharge of his duty. In all these matters, his *official sanction* freely accorded, ought to be, at least, as indispensable as *the assent* of the Leaders’-Meeting; nor can it be more just that this meeting should have a check upon the exercise of his authority, than that his authority should be a check upon the otherwise unchecked proceedings of this meeting. What then shall we say of this system of “equal liberty and equal rights,” which, so far from making the official sanction of the pastor necessary to an act of discipline, or to the admission of members into his church, divests him of everything like official authority in the business, and places him upon a level with the new-fledged leader, who, perhaps in opposition to pastoral remonstrance, was but yesterday inducted into office?

We have already seen that, because "neither perfect wisdom nor absolute rectitude" is to be found among the preachers, it is judged *necessary* "that *others* should be associated with them, to prevent decisions by which some might be injured and others disgusted;" and hence, to protect the flock against the "ignorance, inattention, prejudice, ambition, covetousness, revenge" of their pastors, it is ordained that lay-delegates shall sit in Conference in such proportion, that the people may there have voice for voice, vote for vote, with the preachers; and so that, in any contest between them, the two parties may be pretty equally balanced. But how does this system of "equal rights" protect the pastor in his circuit against the "ignorance, inattention, prejudice, ambition, covetousness, revenge" of a Leaders'-Meeting? Not at all. Does it secure anything like an equal balance of parties here? Not at all. Does it give the pastor any artificial check upon the arbitrary movements of that vastly superior physical force to which he single-handed is opposed? Not at all. Though the contest here may be but one against twenty, that one, the pastor and ruler though he be, is not allowed to possess a single fraction of power which is not equally possessed by every one of his opponents singly. However ignorant, ambitious, or revengeful this meeting may be in fact, it is presumed to be both "perfect" in wisdom, and "absolute" in rectitude; for the pastor is required to submit to its "absolute" will. To say the least, it is either assumed that, in every contest between himself and this meeting, the preacher is in the wrong; or, in every case in which he may be the sufferer, he is fore-doomed to be the victim too.

We next attend to Mr. Allin's invidious but veiled comparison between the Wesleyan ministers and those of his own community in the execution of their office.

When this gentleman talks about "priestly domination and tyranny," we instantly perceive which way the wind is blowing; and in the paragraph now referred to, one sentence about "the unrighteous power of dissolving meetings by vacating the chair," points out the bearing of the whole. Strange as it doubtless must appear to every competent judge, Mr. Allin ventures to affirm that, in the system of which he is the advocate, "provision is made for the due discharge of ministerial duties;" and also, that here "the men who are entirely devoted to the work of the ministry share that honour to which, according to the teachings of the New Testament, they are entitled." We need not say that we flatly deny both parts of this assertion.

We hate all *despotism* as cordially as Mr. Allin himself does. But we have already proved that the system for which he contends grievously impairs the efficiency of the ministerial office, and wrongfully *degrades* the pastor from his scriptural rank. It infringes on and prevents the proper exercise of that authority *in things spiritual* with which the New Testament invests the Christian pastor; and is, therefore, *an improvement* upon "the ordinance of God." It divides the spiritual *authority*, of the pastoral office with men who bear no part in its *responsibilities*; and, to make the matter worse, it takes no sufficient guarantee for either the piety, competency, or Christian principle of the men whom it places on a level with the pastor in some of the most purely spiritual functions of his office. For instance, there can be little doubt but the election even of a lay-delegate is, in many cases, a mere mockery; and that many of these gentlemen are, in fact, just as much the *representatives* of the societies from which they go as certain members of Parliament were formerly of the places which gave them a seat. Here, a preacher can send whom he thinks

proper; there, some lordly layman, whose circumstances place him a little above his brethren, whose anger or resentment is dreaded equally by preacher and people, and whose ambition, therefore, must be gratified, can force himself into the house just as easily as the owner of some corrupt borough could formerly secure the election of his nominee.

Again, the New Testament makes the PASTOR responsible for the outward purity of the church over which he presides. The angels of the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira are censured for allowing vicious and disorderly persons to remain in their communion; and the form of the censure shows that it was considered to be the PASTOR'S duty to cleanse the church, by cutting off the injurious members. This necessarily implies a power which Mr. Allin's theory takes out of the pastor's hand. For instance, in the admission and expulsion of members he is but *one* among *many*, and, in point of authority, on a level with the *lowest*. A Leaders'-Meeting may determine, through fear or faction, or other causes, to admit into the church a person most unfit; and such the preacher cannot reject. It may so happen, for so it has happened, that a man whose conduct merits the heaviest censure of the church, is supported by a powerful faction in that Leaders'-Meeting by which alone he can be punished. We know what St. Paul would have done in such a case: "he would," to borrow the words of Dwight, "have excommunicated him by a sentence of his own, and not have left him to a sentence of the church." We know, also, that he commanded Titus, a minister, to *reject* such; and that, for allowing such persons to remain in the church of Pergamos, the pastor of that church was censured by our Lord. But Mr. Allin's theory leaves the case without a remedy. No matter to what extent the laws of Christ have been

violated, nor how openly, unless the Leaders'-Meeting can be prevailed upon to *vote* the censure, the guilty cannot be punished. So that, wherever such a meeting can be either deceived, intimidated, or corrupted, the most injurious member of the community may gain a verdict in his favour, and secure an impunity to his crimes. The pastor may be grieved and injured too, but submit he must. He may feel that he is obstructed in his duty both to God and to the church, but there is no redress. He has no alternative than to administer the sacramental memorials of his dying Lord, to one whom both the word of God and the dictates of his own conscience tell him it is his solemn duty to *reject*. All such matters as these are settled by majorities of *laymen*; and in the meetings by which such cases are disposed of, Mr. Allin affirms that "all have equal liberties and equal rights," are equally "entitled to *vote* in every matter discussed," and have "an equal voice in everything done."*

* The following remarks, though addressed to another party, are perfectly applicable to the New Connexion:—"I have demonstrated that God has attached many important duties and powers to the evangelical office. Whatever liberty the New Testament grants on the subject of church government, it gives no man, or body of men, authority to diminish the duties or privileges which are attached to an office by the Head of the church. Things which He has not settled are left to human prudence; but for us to presume to alter what He has ordained is impious; as though we were his superiors in wisdom and authority. Of this presumption your rulers are guilty, in reducing the evangelical office nearly to a cipher."—*Rev. D. Isaac.*

NOTE (D), p. 214.

THE *judicial authority* of these Quarterly Meetings is of too extraordinary a character to be allowed to pass unnoticed: When Mr. Allin wrote his Exposition, "in order to prevent the ministry from becoming corrupt," the law of the New Connexion *required*, on behalf of each preacher, "a yearly testimonial from the April Quarterly Meetings," containing answers to a number of questions, and to the following among the rest:—"Does he rule his own house well, and manage his temporal affairs with discretion?" In relation to this matter, however, a spirit of indignant remonstrance, on the part of the preachers, procured the following enactment of 1838:—

"The Conference determines that the certificates of our preachers in full connexion, be discontinued." Subject, however, to the following drawback:—

"That the rule relating to the power of the Quarterly Meetings be *enlarged*, so that all matters concerning the duties of preachers in circuits, as well as to their characters, may from time to time be brought under their consideration, but that no charge of immoral conduct, or preaching false doctrine, or gross neglect of duty, shall be introduced against a preacher, unless seven days' previous notice have been given him that such charge will be brought against him."

"That the questions and answers in the Minutes, respecting the preachers' characters, henceforth stand as follows:—

"Q. Have the characters of our preachers been examined?

"A. They have been examined in the respective QUARTERLY MEETINGS, and are satisfactory to this Conference."

And yet, as if willing to keep this enormity as much as possible out of sight, the matter is thus disposed of in the Minutes of the following year:—

"Q. Have the characters of the preachers been examined?

"A. They have, *agreeably to rule*."

According to the original rule, a Quarterly Meeting was "competent to inquire into any charge brought against a

circuit preacher, in regard to immoral conduct, preaching false doctrine, or gross neglect of duty;" to try, and "if necessary, to suspend, the said preacher until the ensuing Conference." (*Gen. Rules*, part ii., sect. iii., p. 9.) Such is the rule which the minute of 1838 is designed to *enlarge*. So that now the inquisitorial jurisdiction of the Quarterly Meetings over the preachers is of the most unlimited character; available at all times, extending to all matters, and involving the power to *suspend* a preacher until the ensuing Conference.

That the moral purity of the ministerial character ought to be sacredly guarded, is what no Christian will deny; but those who are acquainted with the character and composition of many of these said Quarterly Meetings, with the qualifications possessed by many members of such meetings for managing these grave and delicate affairs, and the manner in which these affairs are sometimes actually conducted, must regard this state of things as alike degrading to the preachers and discreditable to the people. It is but justice to many of the preachers to believe, that they are anything but satisfied with their condition. Bitterly do some of them feel, that "the dwelling-place of true liberty" is no elysium to them. Many respectable men have left it with the feelings of the emancipated slave; and others make little secret of the fact, that did not age, or a family, or other like considerations, chain them to their present destiny, a sense of Christian honour would compel them at once to bid their "many masters" a final adieu.

CHAPTER VI.

GENERAL REMARKS; POWERS OF THE WESLEYAN MINISTRY EPITOMISED AND VINDICATED; THE IMMORALITIES OF FACTION; CAUSES OF INTERNAL COLLISION.

MR. ALLIN assures us, that if the principles advocated in his Exposition were but “fully understood and practically observed *by every officer and member of the church of Christ*, that church, instead of exhibiting the arena of a fierce and protracted contest for power on the one side, and liberty on the other, would present a peaceful home, in which brethren dwell together in unity; sharing the smile of their common Father; bearing the easy yoke of their common Lord; and serving each other in love.” If such were really the case, fierce and protracted contest would, of course, be at an end. This, however, is saying but little. The land in which we live would be an elysium indeed, *if* the sublime plans of some celebrated theorizers were but “fully understood and practically observed, *by every officer and member*” of the commonwealth. And yet any serious attempt to bring these schemes into operation might be not only perilous to society, but absurd in itself. If even the corrupt and abominable principles of Popery were but “fully understood and practically observed” by every officer and member of the church, this “fierce and protracted contest” would be at an end. But Mr. Allin himself can teach us that there are things “without which even peace itself is worthless, and the most painful strife honourable.” How far this quiet among brethren would, in such a state, be connected with “serving

each other in love," is very doubtful. We have no reason to believe that more of this exists in the New Connexion than in our own community. Then, as to "bearing the easy yoke of our common Lord," THAT, at least, would constitute no feature of this "paradise regained;" for, whatever the conduct of some of its admirers may be, the emphatic language of this system is, "Let us break his bands asunder, and cast away his cords from us."

Again, Mr. Allin assures us that the ministers of his community "form the highest class of officers, and are entrusted with the execution of the laws." With how much truth all this is affirmed, it is not necessary farther to inquire. When the object of the writer is to delude the simple, he promises them "liberty;" and tells them, with infinite parade, that in all their meetings, whether legislative or executive, the least significant lay-member has "an equal voice" with the superintendent himself, "in everything done." But when the object is to conceal the cruel bondage to which himself and his brethren are subjected, under the domination of men who always have the power to lord it over them, instantly they become "the highest class of officers," to whom affairs of government are particularly confided. To attempt to reconcile these jarring sentiments would be useless. And certain it is, either that all this parade about "equal liberty and equal rights" is gross deception, or that the highest class of officers in the New Connexion are chiefly happy in this, that they are made responsible for the execution of trusts which they have no power to execute.

As Mr. Allin complains so bitterly against "the unrighteous power" possessed by the Wesleyan ministers, it will not be improper here to state what power they really have in such matters as we have recently discussed.

First, then, in the *appointment* and *removal* of stewards and leaders, "the nomination is in the superintendent, the approbation or disapprobation in the Leaders'-Meeting;" and no person can "receive a plan as a local preacher without the approbation of a Local Preachers' Meeting." In fact, it is an established principle in Methodism, that "no society officer among us can be received without the consent of that meeting to which he particularly belongs; nor can any officer be appointed, except upon the same plan." The concurrence of two parties is necessary to constitute a legal appointment or dismissal; the approval of the Leaders'-Meeting, Quarterly Meeting, or Local Preachers' Meeting, and the official sanction of the pastor, are equally required. Neither party can tyrannize over the other; on the contrary, neither party being able to act without the concurrence of the other, both have equal reasons to avoid a contest, and both are made to feel the importance of acquiescing in what is most conducive to the common weal.

Secondly, They have power to *reject* an improper candidate for membership, to admit persons *on trial*, and to receive into the society any who are "recommended by a leader with whom they have met two months on trial;" but should a Leaders'-Meeting "declare any person on trial improper to be received into the society," they cannot admit him. They have power to *expel immoral persons* from the society; but not until such immorality has been *proved* at a Leaders'-Meeting. Of course, the guilt being *proved* at the proper tribunal, the superintendent has power to expel the guilty party, though some opposition should be made to his expulsion.

So far from shrinking from such an ordeal, we challenge a fair and candid examination of these righteous principles. Whether charges imputing criminality are true or false, is a proper subject of inquiry; and this is

the question which our Leaders'-Meetings have, in the fear of God, to investigate and to decide. But the charge of immorality established, even the duty of the pastor in expelling the offender is only ministerial; for neither the pastor nor the church can retain such a person in Christian communion without directly sinning against the law of Christ. Could a superintendent expel without first proving a person guilty at the regular tribunal of the church, he might possibly be swayed by private prejudice or passion. If, having here proved the guilt, he had not power to expel the guilty, he might soon be placed in circumstances which would render it impossible for him to discharge the essential duties of his office, as a minister of Christ.

Mr. Allin will probably tell us that Methodism invests its ministers with power to expel from the church where *no immorality* is proved; and that this is both unrighteous and tyrannical. On behalf of Methodism, we plead—not guilty. Of course, Methodism, like all other society-incorporations, has some laws peculiar to itself; laws which we deem essential to the spiritual welfare of the body. But then it is, from first to last, *a voluntary society*. When any man unites himself to this society, he does it from choice; he does it, professedly, from conviction, and in order that he may enjoy those spiritual advantages which Methodism, more than any other system, provides for its members. Now, while he enjoys and claims its privileges, he certainly is required to submit to its laws. And where is the unrighteousness of this? If, however, instead of acting upon this obviously righteous principle, this man should begin to oppose the plans, and to distract the peace of the society; if he claim a right, either to trample upon the discipline of the body, or to vilify those by whom that discipline is conscientiously administered, although

he should not stand convicted of drunkenness or uncleanness, he will be dealt with *as a transgressor*. By such conduct the laws of Methodism and the laws of the New Testament are alike violated; and for such conduct, if persisted in, a man is liable to be expelled from the society. But before a superintendent can proceed to this extreme act of discipline, this flagrant violation of the law must be *proved* at a Leaders'-Meeting, as in the former case.

We do not expect that Mr. Allin will pronounce the above conduct to be *immoral*: that would imply far too severe a censure upon *his own* proceedings. But, for the very same reason, his suffrage, in a case like this, can be of little moment. The Rev. Dr. G. Spring, however, though not surpassed even by Mr. Allin himself in zeal for *liberal* institutions, is unequivocally with us. "No man should complain," says this republican divine, "because he is made responsible to the church with which he has voluntarily united himself. Nor should he, when he denounces her doctrines and government, think it a hardship if he be required to acknowledge his offence, or withdraw from her communion." Indeed, that every man who chooses to unite himself to a religious society is bound, as the condition of his fellowship, to abstain from violating the laws of that society; and that by setting himself in opposition to these laws he renders himself justly liable to expulsion from the body, are conclusions so obviously just and reasonable, that to deny them would be preposterous. The principle lies at the very foundation of *all* society whatsoever.

Even the Methodist New Connexion, with all its ultra-democratic tendencies, affirms this principle. We quote the "General Rules" of the body: "It shall be the indispensable duty of our members, and *the condition*

of their continuance among us, that they conform to the discipline of the Connexion." Of course, either members or officers setting themselves in factious opposition to this "discipline," would, even in the New Connexion, incur the penalty of expulsion. Mr. Allin may tell us that the discipline of the New Connexion is *right*, and ours essentially *wrong*; and we can smile at his simplicity, and tell him, with equal confidence and with perfect sincerity, that *quite the reverse* of this assertion is the truth. However, this plainly alters not the case. The act of becoming members is as purely voluntary in one society as in the other; in both, therefore, with equal justice and propriety, the "condition of their continuance" in the society is, "that they conform to the discipline of the Connexion." And it is quite plain that if, in some painfully extreme cases, Methodism has expelled from its communion those whom it could not restrain from acts of flagrant outrage upon its discipline, it has, even then, only inflicted the penalty which even the law of the New Connexion attaches to the offence. "*Quid adhuc queritur?*" Only set aside a few grievously exaggerated instances in which this righteous sentence has been reluctantly carried into effect, and Mr. Allin is left with not the shadow of a pretext for one of the many eloquent and bitter invectives which he has poured forth against the alleged tyranny of the Methodist Conference.

St. Paul says, "Mark them which cause divisions and offences;" and it is a solemn fact, that such conduct necessarily implies a far more serious violation of Christian morality than is commonly supposed. The unhappy man who, for some open act of scandalous impiety, is justly separated from his brethren, is oft less guilty in the sight of God, than is the self-willed promoter of disunion and division within the church. When

discipline is factiously resisted by *officers* in the church, the enormity of the offence is greatly aggravated. The reason of this must be apparent. When stewards, leaders, and local preachers, for instance, are admitted to their respective trusts, they assent to the discipline of our Connexion, place themselves under its authority, and bind themselves to a strict observance of all its rules. Should *they*, therefore, unhappily embark in plans of strife and opposition, the dereliction of duty, the dishonesty and perfidy, in such a case, are gross and palpable. Besides, this sin contains within itself the germ of every evil; "debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults," and irreparable damage to the souls of men. Nay, who does not know, that "where envying and strife are, there is confusion, and every evil work?" Burnet very justly remarks: "A wilful contempt of order and authority carries virtually in it every other irregularity; because it dissolves the union of the body, and destroys that respect by which all the other ends of religion are to be attained; and, where this is deliberate and fixed, there is no other way of proceeding but by *cutting off* those who are so refractory, and who set so ill an example to others." We grant that judgment should be a "strange work." But when men become *determined* to proceed in plans destructive of all order and tranquillity, not to resist them would be a crime; and the Conference of 1835 only re-asserted one of the plainest principles of Scripture, reason, and common sense, when it UNANIMOUSLY DECLARED,—

"That any person who, instead of *peaceably retiring* from our Connexion, if he decidedly disapprove of our system either of doctrine or discipline, and cannot conscientiously even *acquiesce* in them, endeavours to retain and to employ his position among us for the purposes of opposition and strife, is

guilty of a flagrant transgression of *that morality of the New Testament*, the observance of which was a principal condition of his admission into our society, and must be considered to have justly *forfeited his claim* to the privileges of our religious fellowship." (*Minutes*, vol. vii., p. 585.)

It is a happy circumstance that, in the ordinary administration of Methodism, cases of serious collision between the preachers and the local meetings are singularly rare. These are mostly confined to seasons of unnatural excitement; and not unfrequently arise from some attempt to identify either the name or the local authorities of the *Wesleyan* Connexion, with one or other side of some political question which for the time may chance to agitate the public mind. An attempt at once the most criminal and absurd, for this obvious reason, namely, that while the members of our societies conscientiously differ in judgment on such questions, Methodism equally guarantees to each a right to the peaceable enjoyment of his private opinions, as well as to the constitutional exercise of his civil rights. It is a fact which cannot be too well remembered by every class of our community, that *on all questions properly connected with our religious fellowship*, the greatest harmony in general prevails; and that this delightful harmony has seldom been violated where the proper objects of this fellowship have been alone attended to.

When violent attempts are made, not only to engage the church in political warfare, but also to compel submission to the unjust demand, collision is inevitable, if either the pastor or any part of his flock are faithful to the church or to themselves. And, in such a case, Methodism would be entitled to but little admiration did it not contain within itself the requisite power of *self-defence*. An instance which occurred under our own observation, will serve to illustrate the above remark.

To accomplish a political object, certain parties in the — circuit, committed a series of outrages not only upon our established order as a religious body, but upon Christian decency itself, and then factiously attempted to obstruct the exercise of discipline, by intimidating and corrupting the fidelity of the tribunal at which their case was to be investigated. Unhappily, a number of the leaders were themselves implicated in the affair. Other leaders were canvassed, and *menace* as well as deceit was employed in order to secure *a vote*. Indeed, before the trial came on, the delinquents seemed confident that they had secured a majority in their favour whenever the house should divide. However, the charges were proved, undeniably proved, and the guilty parties were expelled. Of course, when they discovered that their tainted packed majority could not save them, they loudly protested against the *unrighteous power* which dashed their expectations. It will be almost needless to remark, that Mr. Allin has piously erected a monument to the memory of these persecuted individuals; and has exhibited their case as another proof of Conference tyranny. And who does not see that, in such a case, to have placed the Wesleyan discipline at the disposal of a majority had been, in reality, to sacrifice peace, and truth, and purity, and justice, to the flagitious violence of an unprincipled faction.

Another case of inevitable collision, and one nearly allied to the former, arises, when a considerable proportion of officers in a society become so far disaffected to the constitution and established discipline of the body, as, in their official capacity, to resist its proper administration. Such cases, however, do but very rarely occur; and they always involve, on the part of the disaffected, so flagrant a violation of Christian principle, that not to be able successfully to resist the attempt would imply a

fatal impotency in the system. The Wesleyan leaders and stewards, as a body, are both reasonable and pious men; men who love Methodism, and rejoice in its prosperity. By a majority of their votes they *decide* every question pertaining to the proper business of their own meetings; and, in the ordinary course of things, their calm, unbiassed judgment is always respected, and frequently acted upon, even in matters in which the law does not give them the right to decide. But in all such cases as those now under consideration, a superintendent is expected to enforce discipline; that is, to defend the CONSTITUTION of Methodism, and those officers who are willing to support its institutions, though but a minority, even at the certain hazard of a painful collision with a disaffected and corrupt majority. For though within the just limits of constitutional right and privilege, *Pars major jus habet universitatis*, is a maxim in our own as in other societies, when the majority set themselves to fight against that constitution which they stand solemnly pledged to maintain, and by which alone their Wesleyan rights are guaranteed, it is manifestly just that the constitution and the minority should prevail in the unnatural contest.*

* "The doctrine of our system is, that ministerial rule in the church of God is to be exercised, not only *for* the people, but *with* them, and that inseparably so in all ordinary cases: nor do we regard any case as extraordinary, but one of manifest anarchy, and incurable faction; which then must be judged of, not so much by the minister himself, as by those to whom he is accountable, and who have a more direct interest and motive in protecting a society from injustice, than in sparing an erring minister."—*Wes. Meth. Magazine*, for 1829, p. 329.

CHAPTER VII.

SCRIPTURES ALLEGED BY MR. ALLIN IN SUPPORT OF
THE DEMOCRATIC FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT,
EXAMINED.

To affirm that Mr. Allin has attempted to *base* his system upon "the word of God," would be to do him wrong. Of all such folly we must pronounce him guiltless. His *fundamental principles* have been examined in a former chapter. With regard to future prospects of success, on what does Mr. Allin build his hopes? Plainly not upon a growing willingness to decide such questions by the authority of Scripture, nor upon an increasingly just appreciation of the eternal and unchanging principles of revealed truth; but upon political changes, upon a more rapid dissemination and the wider spread of ultra-political opinions. Thus, in the memorable Address already quoted, "the more perfect development of the *liberal principles* of government by which the Connexion is so honourably distinguished, the progress of public opinion, and the more just and general appreciation of the value of *true liberty*," are paraded among the cheering circumstances which "justify the happiest anticipations with respect to the future; not only gilding it with the beams of hope, but throwing upon it the more perfect light of certainty."

It is quite true, however, that Mr. Allin has appealed to the New Testament in support of his views; and here we purpose now to meet him. Having affirmed that his plan of church administration is "distinctly recognised in the New Testament," and was acted upon

“during the period which the New Testament embraces,” the Expositor thus proceeds:—

“Without entering into details, it will at present suffice to observe, that so far were the apostles from detaching themselves from the churches in matters of legislation and government; so far were they from sitting *alone* as the fountain of law, and the source of authority, that the New Testament has presented before us no meeting held by them, either to consult the welfare, or to give laws to the churches, but in such meetings the churches were associated with them, and were admitted freely to join in their counsels, and in every act of legislation and government.”

This statement we must regard as every way deceptive and injurious. By it the unwary reader is naturally led to conclude, that many such meetings were held by the apostles; and that the New Testament has rendered it indisputably certain that laymen sat in these assemblies, and exercised the same authority there as the apostles themselves; both parts of which conclusion are notoriously false in fact.*

After all, Mr. Allin ventures at length to go into *details*: thus, “The apostles of the Saviour never claimed the exclusive right of regulating the *temporal* concerns of the churches, and of applying their contributions without account or control. One proof appears decisive.” Mr. Allin does not directly affirm that even the Wesleyan ministers claim so injurious and extravagant a power. But no man, who knows anything of the controversy between him and us, can acquit the Expositor of an *intention* to fix this odium upon our ministerial character. This we regret only on his own account. Happily the charge is *too* flagitious to need a serious refutation. That no such right is claimed by us, has

* On the nature and extent of the authority of the apostles, see part i., chap. v., sects. i., ii.

been already demonstrated. (*Vide* part. i., chap. viii., sect. ii.) Indeed, so far as regards the temporal part of our economy, we rejoice to see the pious and influential laymen of our community filling offices of the highest trust and responsibility, in a manner equally honourable to themselves and beneficial to the church of God.

To us, however, Mr. Allin's *proof* of the above position appears far less *decisive* than it appears to him. It is this. When the Christians in Corinth had made a collection for their suffering brethren in Jerusalem, St. Paul wrote to them in the following terms:—"Whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send to bring your liberality to Jerusalem." The following passage on the same subject is quoted to prove that the same plan was generally adopted by the churches:—"We have sent with him" (Titus) "the brother whose praise is in the Gospel, through all the churches; and not that only, but who was also *chosen of the churches* to travel with us with this grace." Now we readily grant that if the people of God in any particular district should make a collection to meet some distant case of peculiar distress, they might very properly be left to nominate the person or persons who should be appointed "to travel with this grace." But as this is a matter which does not come under any regular branch of church discipline or government, it will certainly prove nothing in favour of lay-delegates being associated and co-ordinated with ministers in the discharge of *ecclesiastical* functions. *Who* was the person chosen to travel with Titus on this occasion, cannot be ascertained; *what* was he, is a question however, involved in no such mystery. "It is plain," says Poole, "whoever he was, that he was a *brother* and a *minister*; one who had a good report for preaching the Gospel." So then, when this pious people had finished their collection, Paul and Titus, and another

eminent minister of Christ, were appointed to bear "this liberality to Jerusalem;" nor was it deemed at all necessary that "*others* should be associated with them," either to secure their fidelity or to prevent speculation.

Again, "In meetings convened for the regulation of the *spiritual* concerns of the church," we are told, "the apostles never arrogated to themselves the proud prerogative of sitting *alone* as the fountain of law and the spring of authority." The proof follows:—

"Are deacons to be appointed? They address themselves to the whole church, the multitude of disciples, and say, 'It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen,' &c.

Looking at the whole of this transaction as recorded Acts vi., it appears to us exceedingly probable that before they called "the multitude" together, "the twelve" had not only been "sitting *alone* as the fountain of law," but that this entire arrangement was actually the result of their apostolical and authoritative determination. Thus much at least is certain and evident; namely, first, The institution of this office proceeds from the *apostles alone*; secondly, *They* regulate and direct the whole affair; thirdly, *They* determine what shall be the requisite qualifications for the office, and would certainly have rejected any candidate who did not answer their requirements; fourthly, *They* appoint to the office; and, finally, That office was not spiritual, but *temporal*. The whole question was about *serving tables*; and the seven were set by the apostles "over *this* business." "The best expositors, ancient and

modern, are agreed," says Bloomfield, "that the phrase *διακονειν τραπεζαις* denotes, in general, the collection and distribution of the funds expended on the support of the poor." Considering, therefore, that Mr. Allin here speaks expressly of the "spiritual concerns" of the church, and that this is his first effort to demonstrate the right of lay-interference in those church matters which are strictly and exclusively *spiritual*, many will, no doubt, think *this* proof about as *decisive* as the former.

By the above mode of proceeding, two important objects were alike secured,—*the approval* of the church, and *the official sanction* of the ministry. The people had a voice in the selection of these officers; the apostles, by fixing the qualifications for office, and by reserving to themselves the right of appointment, imposed a salutary restraint upon the popular will, and made their own authority a security against the introduction of improper or incompetent persons. By the practice of the New Connexion, this apostolic rule is plainly violated; for in these matters the pastor has *no authority*, and over such appointments the ministry has *no control*. On the contrary, *one part* of the church nominates, and *another* appoints: for instance, the General Rules ordain that "the society-stewards shall be nominated by a *Leaders'-Meeting*, and appointed at a *Society's Meeting*." Methodism preserves the *principle* of the apostolic rule inviolate and entire, requiring alike the approval of the church and the sanction of the ministry.

The next scripture adduced by Mr. Allin is Acts xv. 22, 23. As this is a main pillar in the system of New Methodism, we purpose to examine it with care; and that all possible justice may be done to the Expositor, we give his words at length:—

"Is an important point to be discussed and determined,

relative to the obligation of the believing Gentiles to submit to circumcision? It is not confined to the apostles, but brought before the church, and we are informed, 'Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the *whole church*, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren; and they wrote letters by them after this manner: The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles,' &c.

The italics are Mr. Allin's, and show where he would lay the stress of his argument. To discover, however, the true bearing of the passage, we must shift the emphasis a little; thus, "Then pleased it the apostles, &c., *to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch.*" If Mr. Allin will turn to 1 Cor. vii. 17, 18, he will find that "an important point" was there to be "determined;" a point which deeply involved both the good order and spiritual welfare of the Corinthian church, and the personal liberty of its members; and that this point was, in fact, *determined*, not by a meeting composed of apostles and laymen, but by the authoritative mandate of the apostle *alone*. Moreover, that this was his general mode of proceeding, "one proof appears decisive." For having determined the point in this particular case, he adds, "And thus do I ORDAIN in all the churches."

Nothing could be more disreputable than the manner in which Mr. Allin refers to this transaction. A bold assertion, contradicted by the recorded facts of the case, supplies the place of all allusion to the context; and the only portion of the inspired narrative that he has deemed it convenient to give, refers to a transaction which took place *after* the question in debate had been finally settled. Proceeding to examine the case a little, we observe, it is plainly assumed by Mr. Allin that, in this first Christian synod, *the whole church* was associated

with the apostles; that the *lay part* of the assembly sat in a legislative capacity; and that "in this assembly too," from the chief of the apostles to the meanest of the multitude, all were invested with "equal liberty and equal rights." All this his argument requires; all this his assertions contain. Something will be gained if we can ascertain the nature of the question then to be decided. This, it ought to be observed, was not a matter of discipline merely. A most important point of *doctrine* was in debate. The question was about the terms of salvation, and affected the essential principles of Christianity itself. And are we to believe that such a question was left by the inspired ambassadors of Christ to be decided by the votes of the multitude? The idea is preposterous. Yet Mr. Allin assumes, and Dwight even affirms, that this great doctrinal question was decided "*by the united voice of the whole body.*" That the question was not decided either by the voice of the multitude or by the votes of the apostles, properly speaking, is most evident; not only from the nature of the thing itself, but also from the manner in which the decision is spoken of: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things." To the Holy Ghost and to us! To make the *latter* a party to the decision, implies a mode of interpretation which Christian propriety neither will nor can endure. Yet Dwight goes further even than this; for while he ascribes "the authoritative determination" exclusively to "the united voice of the whole body," he recognises the Holy Ghost no otherwise than as a party who "*approved of their decision.*"

But even should we, for the sake of argument, admit that the question was one which might be settled without a direct revelation; still, had a matter of such

moment been committed to an assembly, part of which consisted of *uninspired* laymen, part of the *inspired* apostles, the former had been disqualified, and must have felt themselves to be disqualified, for interfering. But this entire conceit of an uninspired multitude sitting in a deliberative and legislative capacity, on an occasion like this, with the apostles of Christ, holding "equal liberty and equal rights" with men whose solemn decisions were "given by inspiration of God," is infinitely absurd.

And what is there, after all, to support this most injurious and unnatural conceit? Very little, indeed. It is said, "Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul." But to give audience is one thing, to dictate or even to counsel, is quite another. The only *speakers* mentioned were apostles. Even should we grant that a number of the disciples were present on this interesting occasion, the entire narrative goes to prove that this could be only as silent auditors. The presence of strangers during a debate in Parliament, interferes not with the exclusive legislative authority of the nation's representatives; nor does the presence of a number of citizens in a court of justice, during a trial, interfere with the exclusive and independent jurisdiction of the court. But the words will not prove that *the whole church* were present, either *en masse*, or by lay-representatives; for had none been present but the apostles and their immediate coadjutors, all this might have been said; the word *πληθος* being used to denote a synod, council, or assembly merely, as well as a multitude.

Again: "Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, *to send chosen men,*" &c. Very true. But what does this prove? Certainly no more than that, when the apostles and elders had delivered the

sentence which had been dictated by the Holy Ghost, *the whole church* concurred with them as to the propriety of sending a suitable deputation to Antioch, officially to communicate that sentence to the churches. But, it is said, "They wrote letters to them, after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting," &c. Before this can at all help the argument, it must be proved that these "brethren" were *laymen*. Besides, even if the persons here intended had taken no part in the conference, they might very properly have been thus united in this salutation. St. Paul has united others with himself in several of his introductory salutations; but this circumstance adds nothing to the authority of his epistles. In addition to which, it is proper to remark that, since the disciples generally cheerfully *concurred* in the apostles' sentence, there was an obvious reason for thus naming them in this pastoral address; whereas, had they dissented ever so strongly, it is plain that the "decree" could not have been annulled or altered without resisting the Holy Ghost.

Such is the *evidence* commonly adduced in support of this extraordinary position,—for *to this* it really amounts,—A popular assembly of *the whole church* was convened by the inspired apostles, to settle for ever, by popular suffrages, a question involving the terms of our acceptance with God! To Mr. Allin it, no doubt, "appears decisive." So it appears *to us*. The interpretation contended for, taken in the least objectionable way in which it can be put, could not be admitted on such evidence, even had we no farther witness to produce against it. But there is strong internal evidence to prove that, so far as the question was taken up as a matter of solemn deliberation, or to be decided by such a process, it was confined to the apostles and their fellow-labourers in the work of the ministry. In the

first instance, it was determined that a deputation "should go up to Jerusalem unto the *apostles* and *elders* about this question." (Ver. 2.) Secondly, When the question had been mooted, we are told that "the *apostles* and *elders* came together for to *consider* of this matter." (Ver. 6.) Thirdly, The final determination of this celebrated question is not described as being the decision of a popular assembly, but quite the reverse: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." And, finally, it is said of Paul and Silas, that, "as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, which were *ordained of the apostles and elders* which were at Jerusalem." (Chap. xvi. 4.)*

Viewing the whole transaction from first to last, it is hardly possible to imagine evidence more complete and decisive against "the whole church" being made a party to the authoritative settlement of the above dispute. The tribunal of appeal is, at the very commencement, defined in terms the most explicit: "the apostles and elders at Jerusalem." No other parties are represented as either coming together to *consider* the matter, or as *speaking* in the assembly; whilst the final sentence is spoken of as being a decree of "the apostles and elders." To allege this case, therefore, in support of such a system as that developed in the "Exposition," is really absurd. And yet Mr. Allin affirms that, "in the acts which we have referred to, both the necessity and right of the plan are clearly recognised and fully established."

* "On the *elders* there has been no little discussion among commentators. Heumann takes them to be bishops of different churches in Judea. Whitby thinks they were of the hundred and eight on whom the Holy Spirit fell. Most recent ones understand pastors of the different congregations at Jerusalem; which is most probable."—*Bloomfield's Recens. Synop., in loco.*

Indeed, from the manner in which the above scripture is referred to in the present controversy, one would expect to find it written in so many words, that when this famous dispute arose, *the whole church*, vested with "equal liberty and equal rights," were called together to decide the question by their suffrages. And if it were too much to expect to see "the whole church" travelling *en masse* from city to city, delivering them the decrees for to keep, one would at least expect that when a deputation was appointed to perform this service, a party of lay-delegates would be included "in the commission." But no such thing. The deputation consisted of the apostles Paul and Barnabas; to whom were added Judas and Silas, and it is distinctly stated that they were "prophets,"—eminent ministers of the Gospel, men who had hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus.

CHAPTER VIII.

OTHER SCRIPTURES EXAMINED.

FOR the present we must take leave of Mr. Allin. But as we propose a full and fair investigation of the subject in controversy between us, there are several other scriptures which require attention. Should the Expositor proceed to complete his *details* on this part of the argument, he will probably refer to Acts i. 15—26 : we therefore offer a few remarks upon the place. First, then, The business now on hand was not a matter of legislation nor of government. The transaction was one which, in its most essential characters, can have no *parallel*; confessed by the apostles themselves to be a matter too high for merely human authority to decide. Secondly, In *no sense* can the one hundred and twenty be considered as *the whole church*. At one time Jesus ordained *the twelve*; and “after these things the Lord appointed *other seventy* also.” To these he gave power to “heal the sick,” and authority to preach “the kingdom of God.” If we have no proof that *others* were added, we have no proof to the contrary. Now such being the case, and as the apostles and their coadjutors remained in Jerusalem to “wait for the promise of the Father,” the opinion suggested by Lightfoot, namely, that these were a sort of synod or assembly of ministers, is far less liable to objection than others proposed by our opponents.*

* “These one hundred and twenty are not to be reputed or accounted of as the whole number of believers at Jerusalem at this time; (who were many hundreds, if not thousands,) but only those

With regard to the proceedings of this assembly, much will depend upon the words, "and *they* appointed two," &c. Who were *they*? We should say, the apostles: Mr. Allin would probably say, the hundred and twenty. In deciding between these two modes of interpretation, it is of importance to observe that the same form of speech is used to the end of the chapter. We have successively, "*they* appointed, *they* prayed and said, &c., and *they* gave forth their lots." The pronoun *they* requires the same construction in each of the three instances. As to the prayer, it is most likely that this solemn duty would be performed officially by the chief of the apostles. The lots given forth were *two*; and as the hundred and twenty could not take part in it, no doubt the casting of lots, as well as the solemn prayer, was performed by the apostles. But if so, it is morally certain that "*they* appointed," or nominated, the two candidates. This conclusion is confirmed by the uniform practice of the age, which was for the apostles to appoint to sacred offices. The following quotations from two highly respectable authorities, will serve to place the whole transaction in a proper light. "The lots are said to be *theirs* on whom the lots are cast; and fall upon him who comes off successful in the lot. This deciding of a thing by lot was understood to be a mode of showing the will of the Almighty; and was, therefore, from the earliest times, resorted to in the creation of kings or the appointment of priests." (*Bloomfield*.) "They were thus, as it were, immediately chosen by God, and consecrated by Christ himself; no apostle ordaining another,

that had followed Christ continually, were of his own country, stood in more near relationship to him, as being of his own family and society and appointed by him for the ministry."—*Commentary on the Acts*. See also *Heb. and Talmud. Exercits.*, in loco.

but all of them being called and ordained by Christ." (Poole.)

With just as much reason may Mr. Allin refer to the case of the incestuous Corinthian, recorded 1 Cor. v. 3—5: "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." How far this case will prove that the laity were associated with the apostles, and exercised an equal authority with them in all matters of legislation and government, will be seen presently. It must be observed, first, That at the meeting here referred to, no apostle was present. It was a meeting of the church alone, to do in the absence and by the command of the apostle, what he himself would have done had he been present. Secondly, This meeting was convened, not to deliberate, but to perform an act of obedience to apostolic authority; that is, neither to *legislate* nor to *judge*, but simply to execute the sentence of an absent apostle. "For I verily have judged already, as though I were present." The word is *κεκρικα*, "I have *decided* or *determined*. It implies a *fixed resolution* or *determination*." (Rose's *Parkhurst*.) To this the ablest critics agree. Doddridge renders, "I have both judged and passed sentence upon him:" and Macknight thus, "I verily have already judged him, AND MY SENTENCE IS THIS; Ye, being gathered together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of my spirit, shall, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such an one to Satan," &c.

Among those who have laboured to evade this plain

and obvious meaning of the passage, Dwight makes a feeble and abortive effort. We notice his remarks, because, feeble as they are, they contain the strength and substance of what others have urged for the same purpose. He does not attempt to grapple with 1 Cor. v., but refers to 2 Cor. ii. In the first instance, he makes the apostle to say, "Being gathered together,—*I command you* to deliver such an one to Satan;" and in respect of the latter, he distinctly admits that "the sentence" of excommunication "was *directed* by St. Paul." But he contends that the execution of that sentence was "committed to the Corinthian church, as a body, and executed by their vote and ecclesiastical authority." By his own showing, however, *their authority* in this business was plainly very little; for not only did the apostle determine what punishment should be inflicted, but authoritatively *commanded* them to carry *his sentence* into effect; while he stood "in readiness to revenge all disobedience."

Dwight, however, proceeds: "Had Paul meant to exercise his apostolic authority in a judicial manner, he would have excommunicated the incestuous person by a sentence of his own, as he excommunicated Hymenæus and Alexander, and not have left him to a sentence of the Corinthian church." Thus, in his fruitless anxiety to make out *one case* somewhat favourable to his own theory, this writer most distinctly admits *two other cases* directly opposed to it. We accept this frank admission that Hymenæus and Alexander were cut off by a judicial act of the apostle alone, without a sentence of the church. But with all deference to this amiable divine, the incestuous person was *not* "left to a sentence of the Corinthian church;" the "sentence," as he himself has admitted, was the sentence of the apostle. And if, in this instance, St. Paul did not exercise his judicial authority imme-

diately, by directly cutting off the guilty party, he used that authority *mediately* for the same end; solemnly requiring the church to execute the sentence which he had already *determined*. Authority, either legislative or judicial, *they* plainly had none; and as for the executive, the only alternative left to them was, to obey the apostolic command, or to expose themselves to his judicial censure. His object in adopting the course actually pursued is plain from 2 Cor. ii. 9: "For *to this end* also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things." That is, says Poole, "that I might have an experiment of you, what regard you would show to that apostolic authority with which God has invested me." Indeed, a plainer instance of apostolic power exercised "in a judicial manner," it would be hardly possible to produce.

Another argument is founded upon the fact, "that St. Paul *beseeches*, not *commands*, the Corinthians to restore this excommunicated man." From this it is inferred that, "in the judgment of the apostle, the Corinthian church were possessed of the power by which this restoration was to be accomplished." To this, however, the reply is obvious. Dwight has already admitted that St. Paul *commanded* the Corinthians to expel this individual from their communion. And is it not as high an act of authority to command the expulsion of an offender, as it would have been to command the restoration of a penitent? If it be asked why the apostle did not employ authority in the latter as well as in the former case, we answer, Because it was neither so necessary nor so suitable. The criminal appears to have been powerful, opulent, and supported by many; whilst the church was but too willing to tolerate his delinquency. Hence an exercise of *power* was really necessary to apply the

remedy. No such difficulties stood in the way of his restoration. Besides, *propriety* would here require a different course to be adopted. The benevolent object sought by the apostle was not merely that this man should be re-admitted into the church, but that those who had been offended at his conduct should "*forgive* him, and *comfort* him, and confirm their *love* to him." Now the expulsion of an offender from the church is what an act of authority may compel; but when the object is to procure for the humbled penitent an affectionate and forgiving reception on the part of those who have been scandalized by his crimes, the means to be employed are exhortation and entreaty rather than command.

Upon the whole, to cite the conduct of St. Paul in this affair, as being favourable to the rights of popular control and lay-domination in the spiritual government of the church, betrays an absolute desperation. Against the wishes of the Corinthian church, in direct opposition to the corrupt teacher in whom they *gloried*, and by whom the scandalous person was plainly patronized, Paul, from a distant province, issues the irrevocable sentence of excision, and peremptorily *commands* its instant execution; threatening, in case of disobedience, to appear personally upon the scene of action, there to compel submission by the miraculous infliction of exemplary punishment upon all who dared to resist his authority. These facts are unquestionable; but that such a case should be quoted in favour of the democratic form of church government, is one of those sheer extravagancies into which men seldom run while in their sober senses, and which may be safely left to refute themselves.

Deprecating the use of undue severity in church censures, Burnet observes respecting *the delivering unto*

Satan, "It is true that St. Paul, being carried by a just zeal against the scandal which the incestuous person had cast upon the Christian religion, did adjudge him to this severe degree of censure; but *he judged it*, and did only order the Corinthians to publish it, as coming from him *with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ*; that so the thing might become the more public, and that the effects of it might be the more conspicuous." (*Exposition*, art. xxxiii.) To which the following observations of Mr. Watson may be added:—"The apostle Paul, had the incestuous person denied the crime, and there had been any doubtfulness as to the fact, would, unquestionably, have taken the opinion of the elders of that church and others upon that fact: but when it became a question whether the *laws* of Christ's discipline should be exercised or not, he did not feel himself concluded by the sense of the whole Corinthian church, which was in favour of the offender continuing in communion with them; but he instantly reprov'd them for their laxity, and issued the sentence of excision; thereby showing that an obvious law of Christ was not to be subjected to the decision of a majority." (*Institutes*, vol. iii., p. 365.)

We have now examined those scriptures which are most commonly appealed to in defence of such schemes of church polity as that developed in the "*Exposition*." What is the result? These scriptures are manifestly insufficient to support the *inference* drawn from them; much more so to overturn the mass of positive evidence, the precepts, commands, and clearly ascertained facts, to which that inference stands opposed. As to the designation to church offices, the New Testament does not contain even the shadow of a *popular appointment*. The case of Matthias has been examined, and cannot, with decency, be pressed into the service of our oppo-

nents. The deacons were *appointed* by the apostles ; though the people had a voice in their election. Paul and Barnabas travelled from city to city, "confirming the souls of the disciples;" and *they* too "*ordained them elders* in every church." Timothy was entrusted with a like authority: "And the things that thou hast heard of me, the same *commit thou* to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Still more express is the language of St. Paul to Titus: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and *ordain elders in every city*, as I had appointed thee."* And with regard to the general administration of church discipline, we have already demonstrated that, by the ordinance of God, this is entrusted to the ministers of the church, to be exercised in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in obedience to his holy word.

Confident we are, therefore, that an impartial appeal to *apostolic practice* must prove fatal to Mr. Allin's theory; while the most plainly expressed sentiments of the inspired writers will be found to lie *against* the anomalous association for which he contends. Be it observed, however, that the question is not, Are Christian ministers now entitled to exercise the same power in these matters as was exercised by the apostles, or even by their immediate successors and coadjutors? Had *this* been the question, Mr. Allin might have settled the business in his own way. The principles and claims which we defend, we have endeavoured to illustrate and

* "The Presbyterians are obliged to understand this *appointing* of Paul's interposing his *influence* with the congregations, to procure the election of these persons as presbyters; than which a harsher or more factitious gloss was never promulged by the Socinians themselves."—*Bloomfield's Notes, in loco.*

define elsewhere. But when, on the other hand, Mr. Allin affirms that the church government established by the apostles, and exhibited in the New Testament, is essentially republican,—all matters of legislation and government being settled by the suffrages of the multitude, taken in popular assemblies of the church,—and appeals to the Scriptures, we say, with Festus, “Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go.” The appeal, in this case, is *to the Scripture*, and to *apostolic practice*. And in repelling allegations of so monstrous a character, it is enough for us to show what the practice of the apostles really was, and what the unperverted sense of Scripture really is.

CHAPTER IX.

REMARKS, DETACHED AND MISCELLANEOUS.

MR. ALLIN lays considerable stress upon the fact, that the New Connexion has, for a number of years, enjoyed *great peace*; which is mentioned as a proof that the system works well. This is a consideration which we are far from undervaluing. Peace is a valuable blessing; but we have Mr. Allin's authority for assuming that even this blessing may be purchased at too dear a rate. It is well known that the discipline of the New Connexion is rather latitudinarian, and of a somewhat pliable character. We have no reference here to moral and religious character; but there is an impression abroad, (we wish it may prove to be unfounded,) that the very last Conference of this body, in order to avert or to postpone a serious rupture, submitted to a compromise by no means creditable to either its vigour or its independency, and which may essentially injure its character for scriptural orthodoxy.*

* Individually, we have been led to participate in this suspicion, by the perusal of the Rev. J. Barker's manifestoes against "all human creeds and standards of religious truth," and the Rev. T. Allin's very able remonstrance against the heterodoxies of the "Evangelical Reformer;" and a comparison of these documents with the New Connexion Minutes of 1838, p. 45, and 1840, p. 43. By the Conference of 1838, Mr. Barker's obnoxious sentiments are condemned; Mr. B. reiterates them previous to the Conference of 1840. Mr. Allin then writes his remonstrance, and plainly intimates that, unless *something* is done "to prevent it," the offending brother "must look for something very serious at the approaching Conference." This calls forth "A Letter to Thomas Allin, in reply,

Besides, Mr. Allin should remember that the New Connexion is *a little one*; and that ten circuits in the Old Connexion contain several thousands more members than the New can muster in THE WHOLE WORLD. When the Wesleyan family was several times as large as the Kilham fraternity now is, it enjoyed a state of peace and harmony not surpassed even by the happiest state of the New Connexion during the most favoured period of its history. And so it has, thanks to the God of peace, for several years past. Long may this happy state continue! Mr. Allin should remember, likewise, that while he and certain of his brethren have repeatedly done what they could to scatter "firebrands, arrows, and death" among the Wesleyan societies, the Wesleyan ministers have been much more honourably employed in the arduous and benevolent duties of their sacred calling; and that no other community has been found ungenerous enough to do unto them as they have done unto us.

Strange indeed it would have been, if, in the last few

by J. Barker." Mr. B., who is considered to be by far the most popular preacher in the Connexion, not only maintains his ground, but, after a somewhat lengthened induction, leaves it to "the whole world to judge whether the Conference, in publicly condemning his (Mr. B.'s) articles on creeds, has not publicly condemned the writings of its 'revered and enlightened founder,' Mr. Kilham." The minute of 1840 neither rescinds nor confirms the minute of 1838; but tells of "explanations which have taken place between Mr. Barker and the Conference, and the understanding which has happily been brought about;" and states, in consequence, that "the Conference will consign past differences to oblivion, as they *trust* Mr. Barker and his brethren" will follow so excellent an example. We are informed that the final settlement of this awkward affair was left to a private Committee out of Conference; which is understood to have been a convenient mode of getting rid of "the Evangelical Reformer," as too *stout* a subject for Conference management.

years, distinguished as they have been by party strife and fierce political conflict, attempts had not been made to effect violent changes in the constitution of Methodism, although no adequate reason for such changes can be assigned. The conversion and salvation of mankind is an undertaking in which success may be assumed as evidence of divine approval. On this point we are happy to have the concurrence of Mr. Allin. We quote his memorable Address: "The extension of the interests of religion is the great end of the Gospel ministry, and of all systems of ecclesiastical polity; and that system is *the best*, and the most worthy of adoption, which is best adapted to promote personal holiness, and to enlarge the kingdom of Christ." It is granted. Let him, then, show us,—not in the fairy regions of his Utopia, not in the imagined excellencies of some idolized theory, but in unquestionable practical results,—let him show us a system which has proved itself to be better adapted than our own is to promote these glorious ends. On such ground Wesleyan Methodism is ever ready to take its trial at any competent and fair tribunal. It shrinks not from a comparison with the proudest of its rivals; most of whom it has left immeasurably far behind in every truly Christian enterprise. And never was its success more glorious, its prospects brighter, its harmony more complete, or its vital energies more vigorous, more pure and healthy, than at the present.

On the contrary, each succeeding year serves but more fully to convince the careful and unprejudiced observer that, as an experiment, the New Connexion system is a decided failure. We have already seen that Mr. Allin's *Address* abounds with the most confident, the brightest, and "the happiest anticipations with respect to the future." The imagination of the writer revels amidst the blissful scenes of future triumph which

itself has created; the Connexion is said to have "risen superior to the difficulties that for a time impeded its progress;" and with "signal tokens of divine approval" it is also said to be "rapidly rising!" We *feel* for Mr. Allin.

"Was it a cherish'd, dear-indulged deceit?

Yet wherefore past?

While it remain'd, its fallacies were sweet,—

Too sweet to last."

Nearly six years have now elapsed since the Address was penned, and what is the result? True, about six thousand members have been added to the body. But we believe it to be just as true, that when the thousands they have received, during this interval, from our own and from other Christian societies, have been struck off the account, their numbers will be found to be *less* now than they were six years ago. It is a fact that their own Minutes for 1839 report a *decrease* in England of forty-eight; and the Minutes of 1840, a *farther decrease* of two hundred and ten. So much for "rapidly rising."*

* This melancholy state of things is thus referred to by the Conference of the New Connexion for the present year, in their Address to the societies:—"The state and prospects of our community have been made the subject of our serious and prayerful investigation. That evils exist amongst us, which ought to cause deep humiliation before God, is undeniable; nevertheless, the solemnity and harmony of feeling that marked the discussion, inspire the hope that such an impulse will be given to the energies of our churches as will tend to remove whatever may hinder our prosperity, and to establish the well-being of the Connexion."

After all that has gone before, this is sufficiently desponding, sufficiently painful. We fear the time has not yet arrived for a full and proper recognition of the direful source from whence this mischief springs. The root of these lamented evils lies in the *system* itself; and so long as the system remains what it is, to expect any large amount of success, is to expect to "gather grapes

We know that some defects are inseparable from every human institution. We no more contend for absolute perfection in the Wesleyan than we allow it to exist in any other system ; no more deny the possibility of improvement here than elsewhere. But the idea of *improving* the Wesleyan polity by modelling it after a plan which the experience of more than forty years has proved to be not half so well calculated to advance the cause of truth and holiness, is too absurd to be for a moment entertained. The Methodists love their constitution, and know how to appreciate its advantages. Even where they may deem the system capable of some improvement, sorry would they be to consign that system to the violence of men who are given to change ; or of men whose zeal for the reformation of abuses can be traced to no higher a source than to an ill-disguised envy, a mortified vanity, or a disappointed ambition. If the Methodists did not love their constitution, they would be both ungrateful and unwise. And whilst the body of the people are, in affection, and from principle, firmly attached to the Wesleyan polity, the body of the preachers, as the natural and official guardians of that polity, discharged a duty which they owed to God, to his church, to themselves, and to posterity, when they said, *anno* 1835, in reply to the unfounded assertions and unprincipled demands of their misguided adver-

of thorns, and figs of thistles." The capital error of the system is, that the miserable affectation of a *liberal policy* has been criminally suffered to supplant *the order of God*. In consequence of this, ministers are enthralled, and the best energies of the ministry crippled or destroyed. If they would place the New Connexion in a state of permanent prosperity, let this people reform their system according to *the word of God*. Let them at once emancipate their ministry, and restore to it the *scriptural* rights and immunities of which lay-domination has sacrilegiously despoiled it.

saries,—*Nolumus mutare leges Angliæ*: “NEVER WILL WE AGREE TO MUTILATE OR ALTER THE ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES OF THAT PURE AND SIMPLE CONSTITUTION WHICH, UNDER GOD, WAS CONFIDED TO US AS A SACRED DEPOSIT BY THE REV. JOHN WESLEY.”

We shall here take leave of “An Exposition of the Principles of Church Government adopted by the Methodist New Connexion, by the Rev. T. Allin.” The argument from the principles upon which civil governments are founded is worse than absurd, being, in fact, a laboured attempt to corrupt the simplicity of the Gospel. The reasoning about “direct personal interests” is proved to be deceptive and unsound. The attempt to bolster up this system by an appeal to Scripture, is an absolute failure. To which must be added the notorious fact, that an experiment of more than forty years has served only to demonstrate its practical inutility, by demonstrating its almost total inefficiency to accomplish those high and holy objects for which alone the church of Christ exists. In theory, the plan of government contended for by Mr. Allin is decidedly anti-scriptural; and it can never be practically necessary, except where “the priests preach for hire,” and the people confound *religion* with secular *politics*. At best, this system is but an ill-concocted scheme of worldly policy; which, to secure a wretched and precarious popularity, compromises every great and vital principle of the divine institute, and panders to the corrupt and ever-fluctuating taste of a degenerate world.

CHAPTER X.

STRICTURES ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS REFERRED TO IN MR. ALLIN'S "LETTERS" ON "THE GOVERNMENT OF WESLEYAN METHODISM;" THE CONFERENCE OF 1797, AND LEEDS REGULATIONS; IRREGULAR MEETINGS AND FACTIOUS PUBLICATIONS; AUTHORITY OF SUPERINTENDENTS; SUNDAY-SCHOOLS AND TRUST ESTATES.

As we propose an answer to whatever of moment has been urged against the Wesleyan system by Mr. Allin, we shall here throw together such matters as could not be so conveniently noticed in the course of this Essay. The newspaper stories which form so principal a part of Mr. Allin's "Letters" may safely be allowed to pass for what they are worth. The known falsehood of some of them, the violently *ex parte* and distorted character of others, and the sources from which they are derived, are more than sufficient to annihilate the credit of the whole, excepting with those to whom slander is pleasing on its own account. With the personal matters which constitute another considerable part of these Letters, we have no concern. But the Letters are also interspersed with statements, observations, and reasonings, the examination of which will serve more fully to illustrate the subject of this Essay: to these, therefore we shall direct attention. One difficulty, and only one, has here to be encountered. We do not refer to Mr. Allin's arguments: these are generally trivial, and not unfrequently absurd. His remarks are those of a clever but exceedingly bitter and heated partisan; and are generally too extravagant to be very hurtful. But to repel imputations of the foulest and most gratuitous kind, and fitly to character-

ize a succession of sheer mendacities, indulged in at the expense of men who lived and died with an unsullied reputation, and "whose praise is in all the churches," without occasionally adopting a mode of expression which Christian temper and the rigid maxims of Christian propriety forbid us to employ, this is the difficulty. On some things contained in Mr. Allin's Letters, we have already animadverted; (*vide* Appendix to chap. xiii., part i.;) others we now proceed to notice.

First, *Of the Conference of 1797, Leeds Regulations, &c.*—The remarks of Mr. Allin upon the subjects thus announced are characterized by a more than common degree of that *malus animus* which but too generally distinguishes his remarks on Methodism. The branch of our economy particularly under notice is that which relates to the appointment and removal of officers, and the admission and expulsion of members. The subject is thus introduced: "The power claimed and exercised by your preachers in these matters, became, soon after the death of Mr. Wesley, a source of deep dissatisfaction, and a subject of loud complaint." The specific ground of complaint was, that preachers "at their own will admitted members or excluded them, and appointed officers or set them aside." He adds, "The celebrated charter of 1795 was therefore granted with its subsequent regulations." (Let. iv., p. 9.)

Under protest against what Mr. Allin alleges as to the spirit in which they exercised this authority, we grant that preachers "at their own will admitted members or excluded them, appointed officers or set them aside." The question is, How far was this authority restricted by the Plan of Pacification and the concessions of 1797? On this point the letter-writer thus expresses himself:—"Though much was conceded in appearance and profession, yet the chartered rights were few; and there is

too much cause to fear that under an ambiguous phraseology a meaning was couched different from that intended to be understood; while the people were designedly lulled by the supposition that power was given up which was only in abeyance, until a fit time should arrive for taking off the veil, and resuming that which was supposed to have been permanently surrendered." This vile insinuation is reiterated; and the important concessions guaranteed with all possible solemnity by the Conference of 1797, are characterized by Mr. Allin as "the *deceptions* practised on our people by their legislators, in order to allay excitement by a show of liberty, until a fit opportunity should arrive of taking away that liberty under the sanction of the very laws by which it was supposed to have been given."

Besides quoting so much of the Leeds Regulations as relates to the admission and expulsion of members, and the appointment and removal of stewards, leaders, and local preachers, Mr. Allin selects a few of the general remarks which are contained in that document, and among these the following:—

"Thus, brethren, we have given up the greatest part of our executive government into your hands, as represented in your different public meetings. In short, brethren, out of our great love for peace and union, and our great desire to satisfy your minds, we have given up to you far the greatest part of the superintendent's authority."

He then proceeds as follows: "Your people were here told, that the greatest part of the executive government, and of the superintendent's authority, was given into their hands." Now it is quite true that these declarations are contained in the document from which they profess to be quoted; still if Mr. Allin has no intention to mislead his readers, he has certainly quoted either too little or too much. When the Conference

say, "We have given up the greatest part of our executive government and of the superintendent's authority," they obviously refer to their concessions *as a whole*: to quote, therefore, merely a part of that whole, and then to make the Conference say of a part of their concessions what may with truth be said of the whole, but not of the part thus given, is certainly not to do them justice. What object has Mr. Allin in view? Plainly, to convict the Conference of having *professed* to make concessions which they never made and never intended to make. For instance, they say, "We have given up the greatest part of the superintendent's authority, and of our executive government into your hands, as represented in your different public meetings." Their accuser affirms, on the contrary, that "on close examination it will be found, that the only right distinctly recognised as existing in the meetings, is a simple *veto* on the admission of any member or officer whom the superintendent might propose." How then does he contrive to give the appearance of truth to his own statement? Chiefly by keeping out of sight a very principal part of the concessions really made, and quoting in connexion with only a part of those concessions, a declaration which relates to the whole, namely, "*Thus we have given up,*" &c. Of *his* motives we will say nothing; but sorry should we be to have to vindicate the memory of the men whom he so grossly traduces from aught that comes "in such a questionable shape."

Then as to the assertion that "the only right distinctly recognised as existing in the meetings is a simple *veto*," we ask Mr. Allin, to *what* "meetings" does he refer? In the declaration upon which he is commenting, the preachers say, "We have given up, &c., into your hands, as represented in your *different public meetings*;" and of these they have distinctly specified Quarterly Meetings,

Leaders'-Meetings, and Local Preachers' Meetings. Does Mr. Allin then use the term "meetings" in the sense in which the preachers plainly use that term, or does he not? If he does not, where is his candour? If he does, it is impossible to characterize his assertion otherwise than as exceedingly false in fact. In proof of this we quote the following section of the "Regulations":—

"(1.) It has been determined that no circuits shall be divided till such division has been approved of by their respective Quarterly Meetings, and signed by the general stewards. (2.) That no other temporal matter shall be transacted by the District-Committees, till the approbation of the respective Quarterly Meetings be first given, signed by the circuit-stewards."

In these and other respects, a large amount of concessions was made to the *Quarterly Meetings*; but even if we omit these entirely, and confine our attention exclusively to the Leaders' and Local Preachers' Meetings, it is not true that "a simple *veto* is the *only right* distinctly recognised." We grant that "the exclusive nomination of stewards and leaders" was still left with the superintendent. But we deem the following sufficiently distinct:—"No person shall be expelled from the society for immorality, till such immorality be proved at a Leaders'-Meeting." Mr. Allin himself affirms that, among "single-minded men, there would be little room to dispute the meaning" of this important provision; which he understands to guarantee that no person shall be expelled for immorality, until such immorality be proved *to the satisfaction* of a Leaders'-Meeting. If so, another important *right* is "distinctly recognised." We are told, indeed, that, in some cases and by somebody, this law has been interpreted to mean "in the presence of the leaders, *not to their satisfaction*, but to the satis-

faction of the superintendent." And though Mr. Allin denounces this as "a construction which the most unprincipled lawyer would scarcely venture to propose to the most ignorant and unprincipled jury," he labours hard to prove that such a construction of the law would be in accordance with the real but craftily disguised intention of the legislators; to prove that even this apparently explicit enactment is but one of the "*deceptions* practised to allay excitement by a show of liberty."

Deeply as we have a right to feel, and justly as we might resent, the injury thus wantonly inflicted upon the memory of departed worth, the only feeling we can cherish toward the perpetrator of such an outrage is that of commiseration. How the law in question may have been interpreted by A. or by B. we know not, we care not. Our present inquiry respects the *intentions* of those men of God by whom this law was framed; and the question is, Do the preachers of that age deserve the odious brand which this writer has attempted to fix upon their memory? In answer to this question, it will suffice to remark that, on the one hand, it is contended by Mr. Allin himself that, upon every principle of honest interpretation, the provision now under consideration must mean, "that no person shall be expelled for immorality, till such immorality be proved *to the satisfaction* of a Leaders'-Meeting." While, on the other hand, there is ample evidence to prove that this is *the sense* in which the preachers adopted and explained the law. For instance, the law was enacted by the Conference of 1797: in the course of the same year, and by order of the same Conference, was published "The Form of Discipline;" and that document, as then published, contained the above law, together with the following unambiguous interpretation:—"Let the leaders be consulted on such occasions, and the crime *proved to*

their satisfaction." So utterly groundless are the coarse and cruel aspersions which Mr. Allin has dared to cast upon the memory of "the just made perfect."*

In reference to the concessions of 1797, this writer says, "Your people generally supposed that, according to these regulations, no preacher could either admit or expel a member without the *consent* of a majority of a Leaders'-Meeting." That some individuals might entertain these unfounded and extravagant notions is possible; but that our people *generally* were either so ignorant or so unreasonable, we cannot believe. In fact, such an idea is too absurd to be seriously entertained; for,—

1. If the Conference professed to give up to the Leaders'-Meetings, &c., "*the greatest part* of the superintendent's authority," they certainly did not profess to give up *the whole* of that authority; on the contrary, the very idea of giving up a part necessarily supposes that a part was still retained. But if "no preacher could either admit or expel a member without the *consent* of a majority of a Leaders'-Meeting," who is so blind as not to see that the superintendent has absolutely no authority left in the business? Suppose a person really criminal, his crime proved at the Leaders'-Meeting, and that the superintendent cannot expel him unless a majority of the leaders will consent to his expulsion, what is the consequence? Plainly, that the leaders are both the *judge*, the *jury*, and the *law* of the case. The pastoral authority of the superintendent is annihilated; the law of Christ is even set aside; while

* "As to *expulsion*, the crime of the accused party must be proved in the presence of a Leaders'-Meeting; which, as we all understand it, means *to the satisfaction* of a Leaders'-Meeting."—*Wes. Meth. Magazine* for 1829, p. 329.

the Leaders'-Meeting is invested with an *exclusive* and really arbitrary jurisdiction. Besides,

2. The Plan of Pacification clearly specifies one case at least, which proves that such a view of the matter is as unwarranted by law as it is absurd in itself. It is, for instance, therein provided, "That if any local preacher, trustee, steward, or leader, shall disturb the peace of the society" respecting the introduction of the Lord's supper, a meeting shall be summoned for his trial. The enactment thus concludes,—“Evidence shall be examined on both sides; and if the charge be proved, the superintendent shall expel from the society the person so offending.” Observe the offence,—wantonly disturbing the peace of the society; the procedure,—evidence shall be examined on both sides. And if the charge be *proved*, what then? Is it, in this stage of the business, to be put to the vote of the meeting whether such an offender shall be expelled or not? No such thing. The law is peremptory, “The superintendent shall *expel* him.”

Still important concessions were made. Instance, a *veto* upon the superintendent's nomination of all church officers. Far from being satisfied with this, however, Mr. Allin asks, “Of what importance is it that officers have a *veto* on the nomination of the superintendent, so long as no other person has authority to nominate?” That is, in plain English, Of what use was it for the Conference to give up “the greatest part” of the superintendent's authority, so long as they did not give up *the whole*? Of what use was it to give the popular branch of our administration a full and sufficient *check* upon the exercise of ministerial power, so long as that power itself was not annihilated? We understand Mr. Allin. And it is sufficiently evident that nothing would ever have satisfied either him or his party, except such a

measure as would have *reformed* the Wesleyan system "into an absolute democracy." Still, to every man of candour and common sense, the concession of this *veto* must appear an important one, inasmuch as it gives to a Quarterly or a Leaders' Meeting power to reject from the various offices of the church any candidate of whom it may disapprove.

Again, instead of being left as formerly to the judgment of the superintendent, the question of guilty or not guilty on any specific charge is left for the decision of the Leaders'-Meeting; it being determined that "no person shall be expelled from the society for immorality till such immorality be proved at a Leaders'-Meeting." That is, as the law was then explained, and as it is now recognised, "to the satisfaction of the Leaders'-Meeting."

Now if, as Mr. Allin affirms, the preachers had hitherto "*at their own will* admitted members or excluded them, and appointed officers or set them aside," can any thing be plainer than that a great part of the superintendent's authority was now actually given up? And when it is remembered that this is but *one item* of the concessions now made, to which must be added an extensive transfer of authority from the superintendent to the Quarterly Meetings, there is enough to justify the Conference in saying, "We have given up to you far the greatest part of the superintendent's authority; given up the greatest part of our executive government into your hands, as represented in your different public meetings."

Secondly, *Of illegal meetings, and publications tending to create strife and division.*—Another subject of idle declamation and severe invective Mr. Allin finds in the following law of 1796:—

"Let no man nor number of men in our Connexion, on any account or occasion, circulate letters, call meetings, do, or

attempt to do, *any thing new* till it has been first approved by the Conference." (*Vide Minutes*, vol. i., p. 347.)

A specimen of legislation this, he affirms, "which mocks all the attempts made by Castlereagh to destroy the freedom of discussion, and roll back the tide of reform." (Let. iii.) Much as Mr. Allin will, no doubt, be shocked at such an avowal, we venture to pronounce this singular enactment to be both wise, and just, and benevolent. But we will first attend to his objections.

He tells us that such a law cannot be found in "the statute-book of any community in Christendom except ours." (*Ibid.*) But what of that? Communities are so variously constituted, that laws which would be both absurd and iniquitous in one, may be both wise and good in another. The constitution of Methodism is allowed to be *unique*, and so of necessity must be some of its laws.

Again: "Were any member of the British senate to propose an enactment even approaching to it, he would be denounced as a lunatic or an idiot, or would be suspected of some secret design to produce instant and universal rebellion." (*Ibid.*) This is very likely. And if ever a man may fairly be "suspected" of being a little past his wits' end, it is surely when, in such a case, he can *gravely* employ an argument like this. True it certainly is, that the laws of England allow a far greater latitude to popular agitation. It is even too plain to be denied, that sedition or treason may be both spoken, and written, and acted with impunity, until it results in open insurrection, rebellion, and bloodshed. But it is just as true that the laws of England sanction the employment of military force in order to quell an insurrection, and to kill or disperse the insurgents; as well as doom the convicted traitor to a horrible death. And does any man need to be told, that modes of agitation which must

prove ruinous and utterly destructive to any religious society that ever existed, may be perfectly innoxious to a constitution which arms the executive with these tremendous powers, and admits the application of these dreadful remedies? In fact, to contend for the same licence to agitation in a religious society as the laws of England tolerate upon political questions, is not a whit less absurd than it would be to vindicate the application of civil pains and penalties, and the employment of military force, in order to suppress those factious movements by which religious societies are at times endangered and convulsed.

The circumstances in which this law originated ought not to be here lost sight of. To those who are conversant with the history of that memorable period, it cannot be a matter of surprise that the Wesleyan Connexion was fearfully agitated. Whilst a small minority clamoured for revolutionary changes, the societies generally were in a troubled state. Proceedings unsanctioned by the law, and incompatible with the peace, or even with the continued existence, of the Connexion, were frequent; and *two things* were felt to be alike necessary to restore and to preserve connexional tranquillity; first, To adopt such modifications in the Wesleyan discipline as should meet the reasonable wishes of the societies at large; and, secondly, To put an end to that species of agitation from which nothing but anarchy and ruin could be anticipated. To satisfy the one, important concessions were made; to terminate the other, the law in question was adopted. On this subject, we hold the following observations of Mr. Welch to be perfectly just:—"The *magna charta* of Wesleyan rights was not unconditionally surrendered! the societies on their part had, by their delegates, pledged themselves to abandon their irregular and illegal meetings, and irresponsible correspondence

and publications. No mathematical truism can be more evident to an impartial reviewer of the whole events, than that the *new plan* and the *interdict* stand or fall together. The Conference never degraded the understanding of the societies, by telling them they had no civil or natural right to meet when and where they chose; but the Conference have repeatedly declared that the voluntary relinquishment is favourable to the spiritual interests of Methodism, and that the interdict is essential to the maintenance of the discipline of the body. On the ground of mutual confidence, the Conference *issued* the interdict, and the societies *yielded* to it; and the arrow of the reformer must be levelled at this *mutual confidence* before his outcry of tyranny can gain a favourable reception." (*Crisis*.)

The professed *object* of this law is, "to prevent unruly or unthinking men from disturbing our people;" an object in which our societies at large are quite as deeply interested as the preachers are. And what right has Mr. Allin to insinuate, as he does, that the framers of the "interdict" were actuated by some baser motive? Having done it once, let him not suppose that we shall deem it necessary a second time to vindicate *their* sincerity so long as *he* is their accuser. As a necessary restraint upon unruly and unthinking men, the law was enacted; and by none except by men of this description has the practical operation of this law ever been felt to be a grievance; whilst thousands of the intelligent, the peaceable, and the good, have hailed it as a protection and a blessing. For this they have abundant cause; for well do they know that to rescind the law in question, and to tolerate such proceedings as that law condemns, could be attended with but one practical result; namely, to sacrifice the *discipline* as well as the *peace* of the Connexion, to give up in a great measure the authority

of both our Quarterly and Leaders' Meetings, and to leave our societies at the mercy of every factious individual who could succeed in raising a party or in creating dissensions among brethren.

Neither is it true that such an enactment is calculated "to roll back the tide of reform." The things really proscribed or interdicted, are things *new* in Methodism; that is, things at variance with the spirit of its institutions, subversive of the established principles of its constitution, or not sanctioned by the terms of our spiritual union. But there is a proper and constitutional channel in which "the tide of reform" may still roll on, and quietly attain to its legitimate ends. Whatever really and manifestly concerns the welfare of the society, the Leaders'-Meeting can take up; whatever thus affects the welfare of the circuit, the Quarterly Meeting can take up. And notwithstanding what has been falsely alleged to the contrary, a memorial on such subjects, properly forwarded to the Conference, has ever received a kind, respectful, and patient consideration. Besides which, the law of 1797, as amended in 1835, provides for our people a direct and authorized medium of communication with the Conference on those subjects which concern the *general laws*, and, consequently, the practical administration, of Methodism; but which, because they do not affect them in their individual capacity as members, nor yet relate, strictly or directly, to the local affairs of their particular society or circuit, cannot, for that reason, be made the topics of discussion or of memorial at the Leaders' or Quarterly Meetings. (*See Minutes*, vol. vii., pp. 588—590.) The spirit of the Wesleyan constitution deprecates revolution; but it is not adverse to progressive and real improvement.

Thirdly, *Of the authority of superintendents as chairmen, ex officio, of all Methodist meetings.*—According to

Mr. Allin, one of the most objectionable features of Methodism is, "the authority vested in the superintendent preachers of presiding at all meetings, and of dissolving them, by vacating the chair, whenever any subject is introduced which they deem unmethodistical." (Let. iii.) Proceeding briefly to investigate this subject, it will be proper, first, to state the *law* of the case. We observe, then, Methodism constitutes the superintendent President, *ex officio*, of all Methodist meetings within his own circuit; ordains that if he be factiously compelled to withdraw from a Quarterly Meeting during its sittings, such meeting shall be, *ipso facto*, dissolved; and forbids him to take the vote of a local meeting upon "the execution or rejection" of an established connexional law.

We admit, then, most distinctly, that, so far as regards the administration of Methodism in his own circuit, the superintendent is invested with the right "of presiding at all meetings." The *propriety* of such an arrangement needs no defence; sorry, indeed, would the mass of our various officers be to have it otherwise. The *utility* and even the *necessity* of such an arrangement is palpable, if the unity of the body, as a religious connexion, is to be preserved. By the community at large, the preservation of this unity is justly regarded as a matter of vital consequence to Methodism; and the only way effectually to secure this object, is to secure an *uniform* administration. The Connexion therefore demands, and has an obvious right to demand, that in every circuit some one shall be held really and officially responsible for the proper administration of its entire economy. And may we not ask, Upon whom can this responsibility be so properly devolved as upon the senior pastor of each circuit? To allow any local meeting to suspend or abrogate at pleasure the laws of the Connexion, would

be to abandon the connexional principle, and dissolve the union; to leave it with such meetings to decide whether these laws shall be carried into execution or not, would amount to much the same thing; the safety of the Connexion, therefore, imperatively requires a *responsible officer* in every circuit, an officer charged with the execution of this important trust, and amenable at all times to the regularly-constituted tribunals of the Connexion for the faithful and correct administration of Methodism within the entire sphere of his pastoral superintendence. Such an officer is every superintendent of a circuit in Methodism; and from his position as a *connexional officer* both reason and justice require that he be invested with,—

1. A right to preside in all our administrative meetings. Could such meetings be held without his sanction, he would be really responsible for what others may do in his absence, and without his concurrence.

2. A power of refusing to take the vote of any local meeting, "on the execution or rejection" of the established laws of the Connexion. To hold the superintendent individually responsible for the execution of certain laws, and, at the same time, to oblige him to put it to the vote of a Leaders' or a Quarterly Meeting whether the said laws shall be executed or not, may accord with New Connexion notions of "equal liberty and equal rights;" but it will not square with old Methodist notions of either common justice or common sense.

3. Some reasonable check upon the introduction into our various meetings of improper subjects of debate. The *mere* chairman of any meeting convened for definite purposes, is always invested with such an authority. Now all Methodist meetings have a specific character, and are convened for certain definite objects. Methodist trustees, stewards, leaders, and local preachers,

exist as such only in connexion with Methodism; and whenever they meet in their official capacity, it is professedly to transact the business of their several departments. A mere chairman, under such circumstances, would have a manifest right to prohibit discussion upon irrelevant matters; but when that chairman is also the responsible officer of a religious Connexion like ours, he plainly has *no right* to tolerate such discussions. To do this to any considerable extent must always be improper; and it would not unfrequently involve a serious dereliction of duty, and even a criminal breach of trust. Should he, for instance, allow discussion upon some motion obviously tending to subvert our general economy, he becomes a traitor to the constitution of Methodism, and the Connexion has a right to demand his impeachment. Besides, since every separate meeting has its definite province, and various rights and privileges therewith connected, to allow any one of these to usurp the rights or invade the province of the other, would be an act of flagrant injustice. Hence the necessity of a power to prohibit the introduction into any one of these meetings of what is properly the business of another. Nor can it be difficult, in ordinary circumstances, to determine what is or is not *Methodistical*. Matters are not so vague and undefined, but a common share of intelligence, combined with but a moderate acquaintance with Methodist law and usage, will easily enable men of candour to decide.

From the manner in which Mr. Allin speaks of "the authority vested in superintendents of *dissolving* all meetings by vacating the chair," &c., the ignorant will no doubt conclude that this is a mode of proceeding directly sanctioned by the laws of Methodism, and that such a practice is common among the preachers. To the well-informed, we need not say that neither of these

suppositions is true. That in a case of downright faction such a course may have been adopted, is very possible; but, under similar circumstances, the same thing has happened where no Methodist preacher was present to bear the blame. The assertion that our superintendents are invested with the authority "of dissolving meetings by vacating the chair whenever a proposition is submitted opposed to their views," can only be dealt with as a piece of sheer mendacity. Properly speaking, the laws of Methodism do not sanction such a proceeding at all. The only law upon the subject is that which provides that when a travelling preacher is "*desired to withdraw*" from a Quarterly Meeting during its sittings, "if he do willingly submit to any such requisition, he shall receive due censure at the ensuing Conference;" and that if he be "*obliged to withdraw*, the meeting shall be thereby dissolved."* And yet, strange as it may appear, *this law*, the only law which exists upon the subject, is quoted by Mr. Allin in proof of "the authority vested in our superintendents" of *dissolving* meetings at their pleasure "by vacating the chair." Yes, *this law*, a law which most expressly, and on pain of censure, prohibits the preacher from quitting a meeting until its business is regularly concluded, is actually quoted with as much composure as if Mr. Allin believed it to be quite pertinent and to the point!

Fourthly, *Of Sunday-schools, trust estates, &c.*—After giving a long *ex parte* account of a Sunday-school dispute, an account very false in some parts and grossly exaggerated in others, Mr. Allin proceeds: "It is easy to say what judgment the public must pronounce on conduct like this. They must see a determination strongly marked, on the part of the Conference, to bring

* Minutes, vol. ii., p. 347.

the Sunday-schools, considered as property, and all the managers of them, under its direct control, by putting all real authority into the hands of its agents, the superintendents. A grasping ambition, which recognises no rights, except the absolute right of the priesthood to legislate and coerce." (Let. iv.) That the account which Mr. Allin has published was *got up* with a special design to produce such an impression upon the public mind there can be no doubt. But, on this very account, it is liable to very grave suspicions. Besides, even this *ex parte* statement, false and distorted as it plainly is, will not support so foul a charge. The following statement of this affair has already been given in answer to Mr. Allin:—"The case, after all, simply amounts to this: that the preachers wished to act in accordance with the views of all the trustees save one, rather than allow that one, in the spirit of the despotism you profess to hate, to tyrannize over the piety and sense of a numerous and respectable majority." For the decisions of the Methodist Conference on the general question of Sunday-schools we confidently challenge the fullest investigation. They will be found at large in the Minutes of 1827; and will just as much prove a conspiracy, on the part of the Conference, to blow up both Houses of Parliament with gunpowder, as justify this writer's gross reviling on the subject.

Again: "The same authority is extended to your missionary institutions; and gradually are you trying to bring all your trust estates into the same absolute subjection to it." (*Ibid.*) Happily, the character of the Wesleyan Missionary Society is too well known to be injured by any attack from Mr. Allin. For the rest, when a man is surrounded by neighbours who are not over scrupulous about taking possession of what does not belong to them, it ought not to be imputed to him as a crime that he is a little anxious to render his pro-

perty as *secure* as possible; on the contrary, the fact that such neighbours chiefly feel annoyed at his caution, furnishes a shrewd presumption that that caution was not altogether unnecessary. The plain truth of the matter is simply this:—the Methodists have come to the determination that they *will not* build chapels which may hereafter be either occupied by Socinian preachers, or transferred to the Methodist New Connexion. And what renders the matter still more annoying to our enemies is, the Connexion at large, preachers and people, are of one mind on the subject. With regard to our “trust-estates,” the Methodist plan of settlement has been fully considered and vindicated elsewhere. (See chap. iv.) That plan is the same in principle as it relates to schools as in relation to chapels; and simply amounts to this,—that chapels and school-rooms built by the contributions of our societies and friends shall be “legally secured” for the benevolent purposes for which they are professedly erected. But when this writer affirms that the plan in question is one which gives the preachers “*a property* in the building, but without responsibility, and a power to govern at their pleasure,” much as we deprecate the employment of such terms, we are obliged to tell him plainly, that either he is grossly ignorant of the subject upon which he writes, or he knows that what he asserts is *not* the truth.

Again: “In fact, scarcely anything connected with a Wesleyan chapel or society, be its character and professed object ever so general, but must be rendered sectarian by its subjection to the authority of Conference, through the medium of the superintendent preachers.” (*Ibid.*) So far as there is any truth in this allegation, it amounts to merely this,—that matters connected with “a Wesleyan chapel or society” are generally *Wesleyan* in their character and objects. And

what then? It is true, moreover, that our pulpits cannot be occupied by strangers and for strange purposes, without the consent of the superintendent; but a similar control over the pulpit is vested in the minister of an independent church. It is also true that, whoever may be the party intended to be made a victim, Methodism will not allow its pulpits to be lent for purposes of party strife, or public defamation and abuse; nor sanction the opening of its Sunday-school rooms for seditious or merely factious assemblies. This is a species of catholicity the praise of which the Methodists will cheerfully concede to those to whom it properly belongs. And it cannot be necessary to inform *Mr. Allin* that there is a religious community whose school-rooms, chapels, and even pulpits, are easily available for these *catholic* purposes; especially when the object is to promote disunion in the Wesleyan societies, or to defame the Wesleyan ministers.

We have now done with *Mr. Allin's* injurious remarks upon the Methodist constitution: as to what he is pleased to style "practical illustrations of its effects," we again say, let them pass for what they are worth. We do not charge upon this gentleman the guilt of wilful fabrication; but we do affirm that, in his indecent haste to criminate the Wesleyan ministers, he has made himself personally responsible for a grievous mass of fraudulent and malicious misrepresentation. Upon such evidence, he has arraigned at the bar of the public, and held up to public odium, a numerous, respectable, and highly useful body of Christian ministers. Upon *such evidence*, he has pronounced a sentence deeply affecting personal character and ministerial usefulness; and has called upon the public to confirm his judgment. And to what sources is he indebted for the evidence upon which he has deemed it right to institute so grave a process?

Softly, we would just remind Mr. Allin that, upon authorities every way *quite as respectable* as those which he has produced, we could convict the governing body in his own Connexion of enormities even greater than those which have been wrongfully imputed to ourselves.*

* Besides publications of more recent date, we have before us "The Portrait of the New Connexion Methodist Conference," by one who had been "sixteen years a preacher in that Connexion." The charges preferred against the *Delegation* Conference are, "Inconsistency, most shocking duplicity, disgraceful precipitancy, and cruel injustice." Suffice, for the present, to say, that the *facts* detailed in "the Portrait" are *sadly* illustrative. To one circumstance we advert as highly characteristic of the body; that is, the odious practice of printing and circulating "*Private Minutes*." Of these the writer of the Portrait gives the following account:—"They are, in the hands of Conference, made a medium of exposing a minister's infirmities or misfortunes, while he continues with them; and when he departs from them, a rod, a scourge, even a source of slanderous insinuation and oppression. This may be done by a man who has a copy, even when he is scrupulous in not *speaking* against the accused person; for he presents his copy of the printed *Private Minutes*, and says, '*Look there.*' Thus the Conference, on some occasions, becomes the most ruinous source of defamation to private character." This needs no comment. But even farther than this, we *could* "a tale unfold."

Will Mr. Allin allege that "the Portrait" is an *ex parte* production, and that the *facts* are not fairly represented? We demand of him, what other than *ex parte* statements of the most violent and distorted character has *he* ever produced in support of any one of his most grievous charges against the Methodist Conference? This writer has notoriously ransacked the lowest portion of the public press, collected almost every piece of trumpery that could be found therein to suit his purpose, and published *these* as undoubted evidence of "the oligarchical despotism that governs among the Wesleyans." And is *he* the man to object to a verdict taken upon one-sided evidence? Against this we shall most certainly demur. Of course, impartial persons will form their own opinion as to the real value of such evidence. But Mr. Allin has deemed it right to employ this weapon; and, with his good leave, we must have "equal liberty and equal rights."

———Desinant

Maledicere, malefacta ne noscant sua.

There is, however, a class of "practical illustrations" of which impartial judges will not lose sight; illustrations of so marked, so palpable, and unequivocal a character, that it is hardly possible to mistake their import. Let Mr. Allin traduce the Wesleyan system if he will: public opinion has already decided against him, by deciding that, as the antagonist of vice and misery, as a system of purely religious means and agencies, the Wesleyan system is unrivalled in its excellencies, and unparalleled in its peaceful and holy results.

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

FIRST, In its *general principles* the Wesleyan constitution is certainly *Presbyterian*. Such appears to have been the judgment of Mr. Wesley himself. We quote from one of his distinguished contemporaries: "The question is, What is the Methodist *constitution*? And I shall give the answer in his own words; which, though I am not sure that they are printed, yet I am willing to go into eternity declaring that he said them to me, and I know not that he has not said them to hundreds. His words were, 'As soon as I am dead, the Methodists will be a regular Presbyterian church.' And he did not mean that we should become such by making any alterations in our government, for the thing is true if he had never said it; but he meant that *his death* would make us such. While he lived, he was the head, the bishop; but as soon as he died, all his power died with him; he left no successor, he could leave none." The same writer adds: "We are not Episcopalians, we cannot be. We are not Independents; we will not be. Therefore we *must* be Presbyterians, whatever we may choose to call ourselves."*

* The same writer has also the following remark, in which others seem to have concurred:—"Our Quarterly Meetings answer to those church meetings in Scotland called the Presbytery; our District-Meetings agree exactly with the Synod; and the Conference with the National Assembly." (*The Rev. S. Bradburn on the Question, "Are the Methodists Dissenters?" Anno 1792.*)

So far as we confine our attention to the general outline, these representations are correct ; and yet, upon a closer inspection of the two systems before us, some not unimportant differences will be found to exist. Between our Leaders'-Meetings and the Scotch Kirk Session, for instance, the difference, if any, is but small ; nor is it great between our Quarterly Meetings and the Presbytery. But, with sincere deference to some respectable authorities, our District-Meetings do *not* "agree exactly" with the Scotch Synod ; nor our Conference with the National Assembly. True, the laity have an important place in our District-Meetings, but that is only during the transaction of temporal business. To say that the Conference agrees exactly with the Scotch General Assembly is still farther from being correct. Of the presence of the Crown Commissioner in the General Assembly, we say nothing ; that belongs to the character of an establishment, rather than to the principles of Presbytery. Still there is an important difference in principle. The National Assembly *admits*, the Methodist Conference does not admit, laymen in the capacity of spiritual rulers. In fact, we no more agree with the Scotch church as to the *jus divinum* of lay-ruling elders, than with the high-church party in England as to the *jus divinum* of diocesan bishops. Besides, strictly speaking, we cannot admit either the propriety or the justice of a comparison between the Methodist Conference dependent upon the principle of voluntary aid, and the General Assembly of a national church establishment.

In the extent to which it separates the *secular* from the *spiritual* department, commits the former to lay-management, and confines the latter within the limits of a purely pastoral administration, Methodism is peculiar. As the Conference is composed exclusively of ministers,

so the tendency of our arrangements has been, from the commencement, to *spiritualize* the business of that assembly, by transferring secular matters to mixed Committees out of Conference. And when we have fairly estimated the importance of these Committees and of the business transacted by them, it will be found that we agree with the Presbyterians much more fully in general principles, and as to the real extent to which the laity participate in and check the administration of church affairs, than in any exact resemblance in the constitution of our respective ecclesiastical assemblies. Indeed, justice to any one part of our system requires that it be viewed in its connexion with the whole ; and for that whole we know but one appropriate designation, and that is,—WESLEYAN METHODISM.

SECONDLY, The constitution of Methodism involves no principle that is repugnant *either to Scripture or to reason*. As a society, its objects are entirely spiritual. It is a kingdom not of this world. It has nothing to tempt a worldly ambition, or to gratify a sordid avarice. It counts the labourer worthy of his hire ; and so long as he can labour, it guarantees to him a very moderate maintenance, and no more. But because its objects are purely religious, though Methodism denies its ministers all power to gratify a sordid spirit, and makes it ever necessary for them, by kind attentions to their spiritual interests, to cultivate the affections of their people, it leaves them free and unshackled in the discharge of their spiritual functions. It places their authority upon just the same foundation as that upon which it is placed in holy Scripture, and regulates it by the same rule. As a body, the Wesleyan ministers can have no possible inducement to trifle with the just wishes of their societies ; and yet they lack nothing that is really essential to a faithful and uncompromising discharge of

every ministerial duty. In fact, there is no Christian church in which the pastors are "so completely dependent, and, at the same time, so completely independent."

Again, whilst Methodism denies its ministers that power to gratify a sordid, worldly disposition which might prove hurtful to themselves and others, it acts upon the same principle and for the same reason towards its members. What brought *them* into the Methodist societies? According to the language of the printed rules, it was "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and be saved from sin." No other end could be righteously contemplated, and this is strictly spiritual. The proper candidate for such a society will feel himself happy if allowed to occupy even the lowest place. Certainly, a man properly alive to the value of Christian communion, and truly concerned to flee from "the wrath to come," will not be found pertinaciously stipulating for his full share in the government of the church; nor will he claim a right to dictate, in spiritual matters, to the men whom God has appointed to be his guides and teachers in the way of righteousness. His object is to save his soul alive; and in the prosecution of this noble object, no system can supply him with more ample aids. Perhaps no man has written so much against Methodism, certainly none with so much acrimony, as Mr. Allin. Now it ought to be remembered, that this gentleman does not even promise his proselytes from our societies *greater* spiritual helps and advantages than they at present enjoy. When he ventured to assure those who might make the experiment, that they would find within the New Connexion pale "provision *equally* rich and plenteous" with what they had formerly enjoyed within the pale of Methodism, he certainly went much too far; but farther than this he ventured not. Nor did he

promise "provision *equally* rich and plenteous" at a *cheaper* rate. And as for the *lure* on which he chiefly grounds his claim to more extensive patronage, "all the LIBERTY you can *desire*;" so far as it is not a pure deception, it is a mere *licentia pereundi*: a power reciprocally to destroy and be destroyed, a licence to do mischief and suffer loss.

Such, then, are the *ends* for which Methodism exists. To the preachers it says, "It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but *to save as many souls as you can.*" (*Large Minutes.*) The members it supposes to have no other end in view than "to flee from the wrath to come, and be saved from sin;" and what is necessarily implied in this, to serve, and glorify, and worship God acceptably.* And it is an excellency justly attributable to Methodism, above every other system, that while it withholds alike from preachers and people every hurtful power, it confers upon both THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE ADVANTAGES FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF THOSE PURE AND GLORIOUS ENDS WHICH BOTH PROFESS TO HAVE EXCLUSIVELY IN VIEW.

THIRDLY, The spirit and conduct of Methodism has ever been *decidedly catholic and anti-sectarian*.—Scrupulously jealous with regard to every essential doctrine of the Gospel, and, from principle, firmly attached to its own unrivalled institutions, Methodism is ever disposed to think charitably of those who conscientiously adopt a

* It is true that there are various offices to be filled in the church; and as we have all "gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us," we admit that "as every man hath received the gift," the door of usefulness should be open to him, whether he have one talent or ten. So it is in the Wesleyan more than in any other community: *superior talent* is properly acknowledged, but there is "no respect of persons."

different form of faith or mode of worship; whilst it extends the right hand of fellowship to the humblest of the churches which *hold the Head*, and cordially wishes them good luck in the name of the Lord. By a standing order of the Conference, the following, in connexion with other kindred passages from the Minutes of 1820, are regularly read at every annual meeting of the preachers in their respective districts:—"Let us ourselves remember, and endeavour to impress on our people, *that we, as a body, do not exist for the purposes of party*; and that we are especially bound by the example of our founder, by the original principle on which our societies are formed, and by our constant professions before the world, to avoid a narrow, bigoted, and sectarian spirit; to abstain from needless and unprofitable disputes on minor subjects of theological controversy; and, as far as we innocently can, to 'please all men for their good to edification.' Let us, therefore, maintain towards all denominations of Christians who 'hold the Head,' the kind and catholic spirit of primitive Methodism; and, according to the noble maxim of our fathers in the Gospel, be 'the friends of all, the enemies of none.'"

To Popery, as a system, Methodism is openly, directly, and irreconcilably hostile; because it looks upon that system as *essentially* anti-scriptural, intolerant, and persecuting. Towards the Church of England as by law established, the feeling of the Connexion has ever been that of friendship grounded upon principle; a feeling not the less honourable because remote from servility, and comporting with a proper regard to what Methodism owes to itself as an equally legitimate and independent section of the universal church. We admire her Liturgy, we preach her doctrines, we pray for her stability and effectiveness; but we feel justified in maintaining our own connexional independency. We regard the national

clergy with unfeigned respect; but we no more doubt the validity of our own ministrations than we question the validity of theirs.* Of course, our friendship for the national church implies no hostility to pious and evangelical Dissenters; on the contrary, we look upon them as brethren, not only entitled with ourselves to the enjoyment of unfettered religious liberty, but likewise to our esteem and love, as another section of God's spiritual family. Differing with them, as we certainly do, on the question of national religious establishments, we have never approved, much less joined in, their violent attacks upon the church; but, on the other hand, neither have we ever approved of the harshness which, at different periods of their history, has been exercised toward them.

In whatsoever things are pure, or lovely, or of good report, the Methodists are ever ready to rejoice; they admire what is truly excellent, whether found within

* "Methodism exists in a friendly relation with the establishment; it does not spread through the community those theoretic principles of dissent which level themselves directly against it; it does not busy itself in holding up to scorn and ridicule the abuses and evils of the national church. In all its official writings and sanctioned publications, though often called upon to defend itself against intemperate clergymen, it treats the church itself with respect and veneration, and cordially rejoices in the advance of its religious character and legitimate moral influence." (*Wes. Meth. Magazine*.) On the other hand, "We have no respect at all to her exclusive claims of divine right, or her three orders of ministers; and yet have no objection to her episcopacy, when scripturally understood, or her services. We smile at the claims she sometimes assumes to be the exclusive instructress of the people, in a country where the statute law has given them the right to be taught by whom they please, and as explicitly protects dissent as conformity; but we rejoice that she has great influence with the mass of the population, whenever that influence is used for the promotion of true religion and good morals." (*Watson's Life of Wesley*.)

the pale of the establishment, or in the different departments of conscientious dissent. But "they, on principle, disapprove of, and will not succumb to, the exclusiveness of high churchmen; and, on the same principle, they equally disapprove of, and will not identify themselves with, the exclusiveness of low dissent." To both these sections of "exclusiveness" Methodism has rendered itself obnoxious; from both it has received repeated and unmerited abuse;* and by bigots, on both sides, it must still expect to be misrepresented and maligned. But it has also ranked not a few of the best and noblest spirits, both among Churchmen and Dissenters, with its warm and generous friends.

Methodism has often been compelled to stand upon the defensive; but it is never *first* "in its own cause." It has never yet been the aggressor in a party warfare. Often has it been made the subject of attack,—bitter, unmerited, unprovoked attack. Methodism has found its enemies in every rank of life; from the stately dignitary

* Unhappily, this fact is too notorious to require particular illustration. "In what manner that part of the periodical press which is in the hands of churchmen has long been accustomed to speak of Mr. Wesley and his societies, and especially of his preachers, is too well known. There is scarcely a monthly or a quarterly publication conducted by men of this class, whether they be orthodox or evangelical, that has not again and again treated the Methodists with contumely, insult, and flagrant misrepresentation. To give even an outline of the shameless calumnies that have been heaped upon them would be most painful, and an endless task." (*The Church and the Methodists, by the Rev. T. Jackson.*) Nor has Methodism been treated with much greater candour by the leading organs of Dissent. To say nothing of that part of the "periodical press" which is in the hands of Dissenters, the calumnies and gross misrepresentations of Methodism contained in the standard works of its principal writers are such as no ignorance can extenuate, no charity excuse.

of the church of England to the lowest class of vulgar scribblers. In every form of publication, Methodism has been assailed; from the splendid volumes of noble lords and poets laureate, down even to the vilest progeny of the teeming press. Its prospects have, at times, been overcast by clouds "portentous and appalling;" and its enemies have been emboldened to affirm, that the day had arrived which was destined to involve it "in darkness and ruin." Even its friends have trembled at the array which has been brought against it. And, truly, "if it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us; then they had swallowed us up quick." But God has hitherto been visibly on our side; and when the storm of passion, and the confused noise of factious strife and party conflict have subsided, Methodism has ever come forth untarnished in its honour, unimpaired in its energies, and better prepared than ever to prosecute its holy enterprises.

FOURTHLY, its *success* is truly gratifying.*—Methodism has given an impulse to the cause of God and holiness in the British empire, which has been confessed both in the senate and at the bar; which must excite the gratitude of all but envious and ignoble minds; and the beneficial effects of which will, doubtlessly, be felt by future ages. To say nothing of the millions who are, and have been, directly benefited by its holy and, under God, effective ministrations, Methodism has also been indirectly productive of incalculable good. It has roused the giant but slumbering energies of the national church, and quickened those of evangelical Dissent throughout the kingdom; and it is now itself re-acted upon and stimulated to redoubled exertions, by the greater activity and holier zeal of those whom it has roused to action.

* See note (E) at the end of this chapter.

Not only in our own country are its numerous agents zealously and successfully labouring to promote the spiritual and eternal happiness of mankind; "their sound hath gone out to all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." At an ordinary expenditure of somewhat more than *one hundred thousand pounds per annum*, it employs in the field of foreign missions alone, *six thousand three hundred and sixty-one agents*. During the past year, there is every reason to believe the Connexion has been growing in deep and hallowed piety; encumbrances have been removed out of its way; increased power and efficiency have been given to its various institutions; its exertions have been noble; and the blessing of God has evidently rested upon it. From the Minutes of 1840, now just published, it appears that the *increase* during the past year is as follows:—In Great Britain, 16,110. In Ireland, 664. In the world, 22,551. "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place." Amen.

The *cause* of this success demands a passing observation. Under God, Methodism undoubtedly owes much to its connexional union and itinerant ministry; much to the pure, and scriptural, and vital character of its theology;* and much to its general economy as a superior system of means. "The truth is, that no system combines lay-influence with a legitimate pastoral authority to the same extent with our own. And it is this circumstance which, under God, has given so vast an impulse to the cause of religion in our own times." (*H. Sandwith, M.D.*) The following tribute to the

* See note (F) at the end of this chapter.

excellency of our economical arrangements is equally just and disinterested :—" In those ordinances and precepts, with consummate wisdom and knowledge of mankind, Mr. Wesley embodied a system of sacred polity which renders all means within reach, and all individuals in the Connexion, subservient to the promotion and prosperity of that particular church which he had established. Hence the Methodists have work for all men, and they have men for all work. Their whole economy is so admirably constituted, by the subdivision of classes, and the dependence of each upon the rest, that whatever they do, they do with the utmost practicable effect. I feel myself warranted, from long acquaintance and observation, to affirm, that, while in zeal, activity, perseverance, and self-sacrifice the Methodists yield to none of their contemporaries, in the combination and command of all the elements of moral power and influence they excel every one of them. In their union lies their strength: and that union embraces every body and every thing within their sphere of occupation." (*James Montgomery, Esq.*)

At the same time we feel assured, beyond a doubt, that no man will more heartily concur in the following sentiments than the pious and accomplished author of the above remarks :—" The special blessing of God upon means chiefly and vigorously directed to this one point, upon the doctrines we preach, the discipline we exercise, and the public and private ordinances, so scriptural, so simple, so spiritual, which as a body we enjoy, is the great secret of the extraordinary success of Methodism. Those who attribute this success to the mere ecclesiastical policy of our venerable founder, and of those who have followed him in the continued application of his system, have done too much honour to the genius and sagacity of the Methodists. They do not understand the

nature of that system; they perceive not the general principle of its working, and the true cause of its wonderful efficiency. Let them but preach the same truths, and prosecute the same plans, and the divine blessing on such measures will produce the same effects." (*Annual Address for 1833, Minutes*, vol. vii., p. 306.)

FINALLY, The *duty* of the Methodists lies plain before them, and a solemn *responsibility* devolves upon them. Upon their fidelity to God, how much depends! "Them that honour me, I will honour," is the rule of the divine conduct equally in regard to individuals and to communities. From churches, once the most flourishing in Christendom, "the glory is departed." Of some of these, even the memorial has well nigh perished. "Where are now the Asiatic and African churches that once shone so brightly? They have been extinguished for their infidelity to Christ, and as a warning to others that may come after. Where are now the numerous and influential Presbyterian churches which were raised up by the labours of ejected ministers, and which formerly flourished in different parts of England? Many of them abandoned *the faith which was once delivered to the saints*, and degenerated from the piety of their fathers. The divine blessing was therefore withdrawn from them, and their *lamps are gone out*. A similar fate doubtless awaits the Wesleyan churches should they depart from essential truth; sink into worldliness and sloth; and, instead of promoting spiritual religion, devote their energies to the attainment of earthly objects, or objects which are directly evil." Presuming that the Methodists are devoutly anxious to avert so serious a calamity, their way is plain:—

1. Let them firmly and steadily *adhere to first principles*. The present is an age of bold experiment; but

if there is a people under heaven imperatively called upon to adhere to first principles, to "walk by the same rule, and mind the same things," it is the Wesleyan body. With many our principles will never be *popular*, by others our position will be pronounced "anomalous;" but our position is visibly, singularly providential, and our principles are demonstrably the principles of the Bible; and we know who hath said, "The fashion of this world passeth away, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever." To spread scriptural holiness throughout the land was the principle upon which Methodism began its successful career; and if there is any truth in our most solemn and oft-repeated professions, we still exist, not for the *purposes of party*, but for the good of mankind.

2. Let them cherish the spirit of *unfeigned humility*. "When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died." In the present state and prospects of the Connexion, there is enough to cheer us, nothing to intoxicate; enough to excite our gratitude to God, nothing to excuse a boast. Many and deeply affecting are the considerations by which "boasting is excluded;" and by which we are called upon to "repent in dust and ashes." We are unprofitable servants; we have not done *all* that it was our duty to do. On the contrary, had our holy zeal, our self-denial, and our toil been equal to our means and opportunities, how much more happy must the result have been!

3. Let them *be zealous*. The world still "lieth in wickedness;" and, both at home and abroad, there are *dark places* "full of the habitations of cruelty." It is an appalling fact, that myriads of our fellow-men still "perish for lack of knowledge." The word of God commands, and the miseries of a dying world implore us

to "be zealous." The world is open to our Christian enterprise; and, in the beautiful language of Dr. Harris, "wherever the eye falls, it encounters some signal to be active; some object in an imploring or commanding attitude, urging us to come up to the help of the Lord, the help of the Lord against the mighty." Nor let it be imagined that the Wesleyan body has reached its *ne plus ultra* of exertion. This is far from being the case. If Methodism will do its duty, it has yet far nobler energies to exert, far nobler triumphs to achieve.

With regard to the Wesleyan *system*, our duty is not less plain and obvious. This we ought to regard as a solemn trust committed to our care, by us to be preserved inviolate, and transmitted to posterity un mutilated and entire. There is in Methodism every thing calculated to benefit the world; and such is its economy, that every talent with which our ministers or members are favoured may be easily and regularly brought into full exercise, for the advantage of others. Having ourselves enjoyed its inestimable blessings, and witnessed the results of its more extended operations in the world, we are bound by the tenderest recollections, by the dearest interests, and the most solemn obligations, *to uphold, to extend, and to transmit to our children* the benefits of so truly admirable a system of religious truth and order. Again, therefore, we say, let the Methodists adhere to their originally professed principles; regardless of provocations on the right hand and on the left, let them "walk by the same rule, and mind the same things;" and there need be no anxiety as to the result. The glory of the future will transcend the glory of the past; and WESLEYAN METHODISM will be recognised by successive future generations as one of the purest, loveliest, and most active forms of our divine and

SCRIPTURAL CHRISTIANITY. "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen."

NOTE (E), p. 288.

For the following "Table," exhibiting the state of Methodism in 1839, we are indebted to the Rev. R. Tabraham's "Sketch:—

	<i>Cir- cuits.</i>	<i>Itin- erant Preach- ers.</i>	<i>Super- nume- raries.</i>	<i>Local Preach- ers.</i>	<i>Cha- pels.</i>	<i>Other Places.</i>	<i>Sunday Scholars.</i>	<i>Members.</i>	<i>Other Hearers.</i>	<i>Total Ministers, Members, Hearers, &c.</i>
Great Britain	404	924	129	7,392	3,232	4,040	400,000	307,068	1,000,000	1,707,992
Ireland	49	99	37	720	343	392	60,000	26,383	80,000	166,482
Missions	241	353	3	933	723	1,446	56,000	72,727	120,000	249,080
Upper Canada . . .	47	80	10	240	188	282	15,000	14,000	40,000	69,080
U. S. of America . .	1,154	3,106	216	6,800	4,616	6,924	469,000	692,341	1,260,000	2,424,447
Total in the World.	1,895	4,562	395	16,085	9,102	13,084	1,000,000	1,112,519	2,500,000	4,617,081

NOTE (F), p. 289.

FOR the doctrinal views of the Wesleyan Methodists, we must refer to their standard theological publications. If "By their fruits ye shall know them," be a rule at all applicable in the present case, the Wesleyan Methodists have every reason to be satisfied that the doctrines which they believe and teach are fully as much in accordance with "the word of God" as the doctrines of any religious community under heaven. A highly respectable living writer has an allusion to this subject which deserves a passing observation.

"It may appear strange," says the Rev. J. K. Foster, "that the Calvinistic branch of Methodism, commencing under auspices equally favourable with the Wesleyan, should, in the present age, be so much less flourishing than its contemporary." (*See Life and Times of Selina Countess of Huntingdon. Introduction to vol. ii.*) Several pages are devoted to the investigation and solution of this interesting problem. Some of Mr. Foster's remarks are very just; particularly those which relate to the constitution of the Wesleyan Conference, and the active, vigorous character of our itinerancy. Considering the amiable spirit in which Mr. F. writes, the Wesleyans will only smile at the reason *implied* in the following sentence:—"A wish to shun even an approach to controversy forbids more than the avowal of the fact, that some doctrines, as they flatter human conceit of power and merit, are likely to be generally received by the world; and the followers of *Whitefield*, having counted the cost, have rejected these, and espoused the less popular." Thus the reader is left to conclude what Mr. Foster was unwilling to write; namely, that Wesleyan Methodism owes much of its "popularity" to the adoption of a *spurious theology*; much of its success to the promulgation of doctrines which "flatter human conceit of power and merit;" while the Calvinistic branch of Methodism owes its "less popularity and influence" to its greater fidelity to the truth.

The superior success of Wesleyan Methodism is undeniable; equally undeniable it is, that the success which has attended the Wesleyan ministry is of that kind which can only result from the divine blessing upon the means employed; and, such being the case, we think the *legitimate inference* would have been in favour rather than in disparagement of the Wesleyan doctrines. But Mr. Foster is a pious and conscientious Calvinist; and it seems to us that a person in this situation could more easily be brought to believe the most improbable things with regard to the success of *our* ministry, than either to suspect the *peculiarities* of his own creed, or to do entire justice to the theological system of Mr. Wesley. It would be easy to show, from Mr. Foster's own principles, that the above insinuation is as foolish in itself as it is unjust to the Wesleyan body. This writer remarks, with equal truth and beauty,—

“It is one of the numerous proofs of the divinity of the Gospel, that the grandeur and force of its dispensation does not consist in the subtle and eloquent discussion of its more delicate and recondite doctrines, but in plain and earnest statements of its broad and evident principles; and all shyness of those principles, through fear of awakening prejudice, or through a desire of gratifying curiosity by widening the field of inquiry, will render the ministry tame and unhonoured,—the word of man rather than the word of God.”

Mr. Foster must allow us to add, that had the followers of Mr. Wesley manifested any “shyness” in asserting the grand principles of the Gospel of Christ, or had they substituted for the pure and self-annihilating truths of that Gospel, such doctrines as “are likely to be generally received by the world,” because they “flatter human conceit of power and merit,” the Wesleyan ministry would have been “*tame and unhonoured.*” But has such been the character of that ministry? We boldly affirm that quite the reverse of this has ever been the case. True it is, that the Wesleyans have a decided aversion to what they deem the unscriptural *peculiarities* of Calvinism. But they have an equally strong and decided aversion to the doctrines which have been wrongfully imputed to them. We intend no reflection upon

Mr. Foster or upon those who think with him; but in reply to his insinuation we say firmly, and without hesitation, "We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."

APPENDIX.

OBSERVATIONS ON "WESLEYAN METHODISM CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO THE CHURCH," BY THE REV. R. HODGSON, M.A., EVENING LECTURER OF ST. PETER'S, CORNHILL.

THE administration of the sacraments by Wesleyan ministers is a subject on which we have already expressed our sentiments. (*Vide Essay*, pp. 76—83, inclusive.) Since those remarks were put to press, the Rev. R. Hodgson, M.A., has published his "Wesleyan Methodism considered in relation to the Church." We have read his pamphlet with much pleasure; and though we have seen no reason to alter our opinion on the subject under notice, we have been induced to offer a few additional remarks. The spirit in which Mr. Hodgson writes is highly creditable to himself, both as a gentleman and a Christian minister. And while he professes to be "neither an opponent nor an apologist," we beg to assure him that it is *not* our intention to place him in the list of those writers by whom Methodism has been either wilfully *misrepresented* or *assailed*. There is, however, *one subject* on which we think Mr. Hodgson has fallen into serious error; and *to that*, chiefly, we shall devote a moment's friendly consideration. The following sentence from "Methodism considered in relation to the Church," contains the point at issue:—

"When the Wesleyans have weighed this evidence, let them cheerfully concede to us the admission that the

'*separation*' of Methodism from the Church of England, as effected by the 'Plan of Pacification' in 1795, was in 'flat opposition' to the *advice* and *example* of Mr. Wesley, and to the *principles* which he uniformly inculcated during a long ministerial career of half a century." (P. 72.)

As the present inquiry relates to "the separation of Methodism from the Church of England," in so far as that *separation* was "effected by the Plan of Pacification," our FIRST duty is, to ascertain how far the separation alleged was *really effected* by the said Plan of Pacification. Two points of practice are here involved,—service in church hours, and the administration of the sacraments by Wesleyan ministers. With regard to these, it is a *fact* that service in church hours was, to a considerable extent, allowed by Mr. Wesley; it is also a *fact* that several of the preachers were empowered and authorized by Mr. Wesley to administer the sacraments to the Methodist societies. It cannot, therefore, be asserted, on the one hand, that the Plan of Pacification either introduced a *new principle* into the Methodist economy, or sanctioned a *new practice* in Methodism; but it is admitted, on the other hand, that the Plan of Pacification allowed service in church hours with *fewer restrictions* than formerly, and sanctioned, to a considerably *greater extent* than formerly, the administration of the sacraments by Wesleyan ministers.

On the first of these subjects, much need not now be said; particularly since Mr. Hodgson is of opinion that "the principal innovation effected by the Conference, after the death of Mr. Wesley, related to the *administration of the sacrament*." (P. 43.) Indeed, Mr. Wesley had already conceded so much on the point of service in church hours, that the *practical effect* of the Plan of

Pacification was much less considerable, in this respect, than some apparently suppose. (*Vide Essay*, p. 82.)

The principal question, therefore, confessedly is, How far was Methodism separated from the Church by the new regulations concerning the SACRAMENT? To which we are compelled to answer, *in Mr. Wesley's view of separation*,—Not at all! When Mr. Wesley ordained a number of the preachers, and authorized them to administer the sacraments to the societies, did he consider, or would he have admitted that, by so doing, he had *separated from the Church* either the preachers so ordained, or the societies to which they administered? Most assuredly not. We must repeat it, therefore, in Mr. Wesley's view of separation, “the *separation* of Methodism from the Church, as effected by the Plan of Pacification,” was no separation at all. Had the “Plan” in question *required* the people to receive the sacrament from their own ministers, and *prohibited* them from receiving the sacrament in the Church, then, and then only, would it have been, in Mr. Wesley's view of the case, a measure of *separation*. But it did neither one nor the other. Here, therefore, we think Mr. Hodgson has written under a serious misapprehension of his subject.

Again, In its *practical operation*, the Plan of Pacification effected no injury to the national Church; while it most certainly averted from Methodism an incalculable amount of evil. The following remark of Mr. Watson is amply borne out by the facts of the case:—“Assuredly the Church would have gained nothing by a different measure, for the dissidents would have been compelled to join the professed Dissenters.” Whereas, it is quite clear that this very measure was, under God, *the salvation* of Methodism. So far, therefore, from being in the least degree liable to censure,

we cannot but look upon this measure as eminently wise and salutary; and as being justly entitled to the approval of every man who is really attached "to the cause of party" *less* than "to the cause of truth."

While, however, we contend that Mr. Hodgson has taken an erroneous view of the Plan of Pacification, and that in Mr. Wesley's view of separation that "Plan" effected no "separation of Methodism from the Church;" we would not be understood as denying that the measure now under consideration had *an important practical effect* upon the relation of Methodism to the Church. Fully admitting that such was the case, we proceed to inquire:—

SECONDLY, How far this arrangement was, or was not, "in flat opposition" to the *advice*, the *example*, and the *principles* of Mr. Wesley. Happily, we are *not* required to vindicate Mr. Wesley's godly sincerity and uprightness of purpose. These are points on which Mr. Hodgson has had too much candour to raise a doubt. On the contrary, without pledging himself to the *clerical propriety* of Mr. Wesley's conduct, he has furnished an ample vindication of Mr. Wesley's character and motives against the unmerited aspersions and grievous calumnies of others. At the same time, we are bound to concede to this gentleman that Mr. Wesley was, on principle, a churchman; and that his attachment to the Church was deep and permanent. Still, churchman as he really was, there is no denying the fact that, keeping steadily in view the glory of God, as his grand and primary object, Mr. Wesley did, from time to time, sacrifice his *church prejudices*, and various matters of *church order*, in favour of his own societies and of the discipline which he considered it to be his duty to establish and to maintain among them.

Now, in order correctly to ascertain Mr. Wesley's

principles in relation to these matters, the proper mode of proceeding appears to us to be this:—To advert briefly to the principal points in which he deviated from established church-order; and to ascertain, as far as possible, under each particular, the grounds and reasons of his conduct. This method we purpose to adopt. To narrow the inquiry as much as possible, and to avoid unnecessary disputes, we shall take up these *points of divergency* as stated by Mr. Hodgson, and shall admit that he has stated these points with accuracy and candour.

We begin with “the formation of *distinct societies* ;” a step, on the part of Mr. Wesley, in regard to which Mr. Hodgson remarks: “Here then commences the point of separation.” And again: “The formation of distinct ‘societies’ contained the germs of a future separation.” (Pp. 29, 30.) The *principle* on which Mr. Wesley acted is obvious. We quote Mr. Hodgson: “To a mind naturally so reflecting as his, the suggestion very soon occurred that something more than preaching was requisite to render the good effects of preaching permanent. He observed that wherever he neglected to form ‘societies,’ and to introduce Christian fellowship, the effects of his preaching were only transitory,” &c. (P. 27.) Again: “Whatever inconsistencies may be charged upon Mr. Wesley, it cannot be denied that his conduct was consistent with *the object he had in view*,—that of securing the perpetuity of his labours.” (P. 28.)

The next important point of deviation was the employment of *lay-agents*. We again take Mr. Hodgson’s statement of the question: “Mr. Wesley soon found himself involved in the dilemma either of relinquishing the societies, or employing *lay-agency*, and thus committing another violation of church order and discipline.” (P. 32.) It is perfectly needless to ask, which side of this alter-

native did Mr. Wesley adopt. That he *committed* "another violation of church order" rather than *relinquish* "the societies," is matter of indisputable fact and notoriety.

The third, and most important particular in which Mr. Wesley deviated from strict church order was his assumption of "*the power of ordination.*" His ordaining ministers for America and Scotland are facts upon which we need not dwell; and, for the rest, we again quote Mr. Hodgson: "It was not till the year 1790, that he claimed the full exercise of this power for England also." (P. 39.)* Mr. Moore, the venerable biographer and contemporary of Mr. Wesley, was one of the individuals now ordained; and from him we quote the following:—

"Mr. Wesley had hitherto ordained ministers only for America and Scotland. But, during the period I have mentioned, being assisted by other presbyters of the Church of England, he set apart a certain number of preachers for the sacred office, by the imposition of his hands and prayer, without sending them out of England; strongly advising them, at the same time, that, according to his example, they should continue united to the established Church, so far as that work of God in which they were engaged would permit." (*Life of Wesley*, vol. ii., p. 385.)

The painful circumstances under which Mr. Wesley took this most decisive step are well known; and if we

* As to *date*, this is not quite correct. Mr. Moore's letters of ordination are dated Feb., 1789; and several preachers were ordained by Mr. Wesley somewhat earlier than this. On the same subject we have the following remark:—"Mr. Wesley's assumption of the power of ordination was based as much upon *erroneous theory* as practical expedience." (P. 35.) This, of course, is mere assumption. In reply to which, we shall merely say—*Negatur*.

advert to them at all, it is not for the purpose of re-
 crimination, but because *truth* imperatively demands it.
 We refer, of course, to the prosecution of the Methodists
 under the persecuting provisions of the "Conventicle
 Act." It is really melancholy to think, that in this
 persecution (for such it really was) were combined the
 magistrates, the clergy, and, in one or two instances, at
 least, the bishops. Writing to one of these prelates,
 under date of June 26, 1790, in a tone of dignified, but
 severe and even indignant remonstrance, Mr. Wesley
 denounced these harsh proceedings as *persecution* of the
 most cruel kind. Towards the conclusion of his letter
 he says: "And your Lordship does this under colour
 of a vile, execrable law, not a whit better than that *de*
hæretico comburendo;" that is, *concerning the burning of*
heretics. (*Works*, vol. xiii., p. 119.)

Now by what *principle* was Mr. Wesley's conduct
 regulated throughout this trying occasion? That his
 conscientious attachment to the Church was still un-
 diminished, we will grant. But that attachment was still
 obviously subordinated to *higher principles*; first, To an
 unbending determination to act in all things as might be
 most conducive to the advancement of true religion; and,
 as essentially connected with *that*, secondly, An anxious
 concern to preserve the integrity and promote the
 spiritual welfare of his beloved "societies." And the
fact is again notorious, that Mr. Wesley so far relin-
 quished his prejudices in favour of the Establishment,
 as to commit what has been called "*an aggression on*
the episcopal functions" in favour of the societies. Dr.
 Sandwith has stated the case with equal clearness and
 fidelity, thus:—

"It was in the agony of mind caused by these pro-
 ceedings, that Mr. Wesley, who perceived their tendency
 was either to extinguish Methodism, or force his

societies on dissent, preferred the milder alternative; and in anticipation of the (partial) separation of his societies from the Church, conferred a presbyterian ordination on certain individuals of the Conference, guarded, however, and qualified by his inextinguishable attachment to the Church of England."—*Wes. Meth. Mag.* for 1829, p. 604.*

With the correctness of Mr. Wesley's opinions *theoretically* considered, we have at present no concern. The *fact* is clearly established. On the verge of the grave, after many years of deep and prayerful deliberation, solemnly impressed with the awfully responsible situation in which he was providentially placed, and fully satisfied both as to the fitness and the necessity of such a step, Mr. Wesley *ordained*, or "set apart for the sacred office, a certain number of preachers, without sending them out of England."

In what light Mr. Wesley regarded these *ordained* preachers, and with what powers he invested them, we learn from the "Letters of Ordination" given by him to the Rev. H. Moore; in which "Letters" he speaks of Mr. Moore as a man whom "I judge qualified to feed the flock of Christ, and to administer the sacraments of

* "That all these measures tended to effect a quasi-separation from the Establishment," is a point which Mr. Hodgson thinks "cannot be doubted." He is also of opinion that Mr. Wesley himself might entertain "his fears and suspicions" respecting such a result; and adds, "But that he introduced all or any of these innovations with the express object of *effecting* that separation, is a position which must fall to the ground for want of proof." (P. 42.) In this sentiment we entirely concur. Still it appears to us pretty certain that *one* of the above measures, the ordination of several preachers "by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery,"—was adopted under a painful prescience of coming events, and for the "express object" of leaving the Connexion fully prepared to meet those events.

baptism and the Lord's supper, according to the usage of the Church of England; and, as such, I do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern."—*Wes. Meth. Mag.* for 1841, p. 129.

On what ground then, or with what colour of reason, can it possibly be alleged, that when the Conference of 1795, borne down by the necessities of the case, *merely extended* a provision which that eminent man had thus deliberately made for the wants and wishes of his societies, they acted "in flat opposition" to the *example* and to the *principles* of Mr. Wesley? So far from admitting the opposition here alleged, we deny that there was even a *deviation* either in the one particular or the other. If we have any regret on this subject, it is that so estimable a writer as Mr. Hodgson should have thought himself fairly entitled to make a demand upon our "candour," which that very quality obliges us thus peremptorily to refuse. The Christian moderation, impartiality, and good feeling with which this gentleman writes, the Methodists both can and will appreciate and respect. But most assuredly they do not, they never will, they never can concede to him, that the measure under consideration "was in 'flat opposition' to the advice and example of Mr. Wesley, and to the principles which he uniformly inculcated."

So far, then, we feel ourselves justly entitled to conclude that neither against the *principles* of Mr. Wesley, nor yet against his *example*, have those who adopted the Plan of Pacification "offended any thing at all." One word with regard to Mr. Wesley's "advice." This we admit was very pointed, and we firmly believe it was as perfectly sincere. We will grant also that, so long and so far as the course *advised* could be fairly regarded as practicable, the Conference stood morally bound to adopt the advice of its founder, and to walk by the same

rule. Farther than this, however, we cannot go. The "advice" which Mr. Wesley gave the Conference in these matters, was the *rule* by which he regulated his own conduct as far as possible; but still a rule from which he was himself compelled, in several grave particulars, to deviate. Now Mr. Wesley was too reasonable a man (and so we trust is Mr. Hodgson) to require or to expect the Conference to adhere to his advice in any sense in which he found it either impossible or inexpedient to adhere to that advice himself. Looking at the matter in the abstract, we should conclude that the only law properly binding upon the Conference was Mr. Wesley's advice, as qualified and explained by his example; and an inquiry into the facts of the case will demonstrate that this is the only rule by which Mr. Wesley intended to bind the Conference. We adduce the testimony of Mr. Moore, who, after stating that Mr. Wesley ordained a certain number of preachers to the sacred office, without sending them out of England, thus continues: "strongly advising them that, according to *his example*, they should continue united to the established Church, *so far* as the work of God in which they were engaged would permit."

Fully alive to the fact that those who did not rightly understand his "motives of acting" would be liable to think him "inconsistent" with himself, Mr. Wesley announced the following as the *rule* of his conduct:—"Put these *two principles* together: first, I will not separate from the Church; yet, secondly, *In cases of necessity*, I will vary from it." (*Works*, vol. vii., p. 279.) On another occasion he writes: "Consistently with this, I do tolerate lay-preaching, because I conceive there is an absolute *necessity* for it; yet I do not tolerate lay-administering, because I do *not* conceive there is any such *necessity* for it." Again: "Were I to break, or

allow others to break, an ordinance of man, where there is no necessity, I should contradict my own principle as much as if I did not allow it to be broken where there is." (*Works*, vol. xiii., p. 187.) Here two remarks will naturally occur,—

First, *It is not* the mere sanction accorded to "lay-administering" that contradicts Mr. Wesley's "principles," but the according of that sanction without some obvious necessity. On the contrary, to have adopted this practice when no necessity required it, or to have refused to adopt this practice when it had become really necessary, had been equally to "contradict" the *principle* above laid down. So that, even if Mr. Wesley had never at all sanctioned the administration of the sacraments by his own preachers, it would have been incumbent on those who charge the Conference of 1795 with having acted in "flat opposition" to Mr. Wesley's principles, to prove, not only that the Conference sanctioned such a practice, but that they did this *without an obvious necessity*. For, so far as such a necessity is allowed to have existed, Mr. Wesley's principles not only sanctioned, but positively *required*, the adoption of such a measure.

Secondly, Such being Mr. Wesley's *avowed principles*, it was to be expected that if at any future time he should deem it *necessary* to sanction the administration of the sacraments by his own preachers, he would concede this sanction. And the *fact* is indisputable that, thirty years subsequent to this date, Mr. Wesley did so far admit such a step to be necessary that he ordained a certain number of preachers "to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper" to his societies.* So that, as stated above, both the *principle*

* By "lay-administering," Mr. Wesley evidently means the administering of those preachers who are "unordained." So he

and the *practice* which we have undertaken to defend originated with Mr. Wesley himself; and had the unequivocal sanction of his authority and example.

Admitting, then, which we do admit, that the Plan of Pacification carried the application of Mr. Wesley's principle somewhat beyond what he himself had previously carried it, (and it did *no more* than this,) the question is, How far can the necessities of the case be righteously pleaded in justification of the Conference of 1795? That the measure which they adopted was really and extensively "*palliated* by the necessities of the case," is admitted by Mr. Hodgson. And we think it cannot fairly be denied, that the considerations which compelled Mr. Wesley to *adopt* the principle had, from change of circumstances, become much more powerful to compel, before the Conference consented to *extend* the application of that principle. In fact, an awful crisis had arrived. An ominous and painful agitation rocked the Connexion to its very centre. "Without

repeatedly explains himself. (*Works*, vol. xiii., p. 187.) He believed there is no harm in allowing persons unordained to preach; but he had a strong and conscientious objection to allowing an unordained person to administer the sacrament. Hence when he found it necessary to allow some of the preachers to administer the sacraments, he did, as we have seen, ordain them for that purpose. The Conference has ever acted upon the same principle. The nefarious "tract" referred to in a former note on this subject, contains the following sentence:—"Speaking to lay-preachers on their desire to administer the sacraments, he (Mr. Wesley) says, 'You believe it to be a duty; I believe it is a sin.'" (P. 6.) Now it is quite true that Mr. Wesley does say, "I believe it to be a sin." But it is quite as plain from the context that he says this *only* in reference to preachers *unordained*: a fact which the compiler of the tract has intentionally and *fraudulently* suppressed, evidently for the purpose of making Mr. Wesley say what he plainly never intended to say.

were fightings, within were fears." Mr. Wesley no longer lived, either to bless by his "angel visits," and administer the holy sacraments to his numerous societies; or to awe, by his justly deserved and truly patriarchal authority, the rising spirit of discontent among the people. It is in the full and vivid recollection of these interesting facts that the following passage should be read:—"When we assembled together," say the Conference of 1795, "our hearts were most deeply touched with the awful situation of our affairs. We trembled at the thought of a division, and its dreadful consequences; and therefore determined to set apart the first day of the Conference, as a day of solemn and real fasting and prayer." (*Minutes*, vol. i., p. 321.)

In a word, the situation of the Conference when it *extended* the rule, as compared with that of Mr. Wesley when he *adopted* the rule, was plainly this: the necessities of the case had become much more urgent and imperative; the *pressure* to be resisted was immensely greater, the *power* to resist immensely less. In fact, the measure they now adopted had become absolutely *necessary*. Necessary to secure the ends of peace and charity; necessary to secure the vital interests of "pure religion and undefiled;" necessary to prevent a wider and far more disastrous separation both from the Church and from Methodism; and, therefore, necessary to avert a dire amount of evil from the cause of God and the truth. In every truly wise, and sober, and Christian sense of the word, it had become *necessary*; and, therefore, a faithful adherence to Mr. Wesley's principles not only warranted, but positively required, the adoption of this healing measure.

In proportion as there is any validity in our reasoning on this subject, the following points are now established: (1.) That, so far as regards the administration of the

sacraments and service in church hours, the Plan of Pacification introduced *no new principle* into the Methodistic economy, sanctioned *no new practice* in Methodism; (2.) That the entire principle of the new regulations originated with Mr. Wesley, while the expediency of a farther application of this principle was that alone with which the Conference ever had to do; (3.) That the Conference of 1795 merely extended a provision which Mr. Wesley had previously made for his societies; and that, (4.) When the Conference of 1795 did consent to extend this wise and necessary provision, their conduct was in the highest degree proper, and still in strict accordance with the principles of Mr. Wesley.*

As to the *spirit* in which the Conference acted on this memorable occasion, the sincerity, moderation, and caution which characterized their proceedings, Mr. Hodgson's candour has relieved us from the necessity of saying a single word. Here, then, we close. Should any one think we have bestowed unnecessary pains upon this part of our subject, our answer is simply this: The wicked and unfeeling attacks which have been made

* The line of argument which we have adopted, Mr. Hodgson seems to have been willing to anticipate by a sort of *demurrer*, thus: "From any uncertain hypothesis as to what Mr. Wesley himself would have done in similar circumstances, our conclusions must be still more uncertain. Let us look merely to the evidence of facts, of opinions openly avowed and consistently maintained." (P. 72.) Our argument, however, is not based upon *mere* "hypothesis;" nor can any material uncertainty be attached to the conclusion at which we have arrived. We have looked to the "evidence of facts;" and we have argued chiefly from "opinions openly avowed and consistently maintained" by Mr. Wesley. We have proved by the clearest evidence that Mr. Wesley's *rule* has not been violated. *This* is properly the point in debate; and, so far, "*uncertain hypothesis*" is entirely out of the question.

upon the Conference of 1795, (*not* by Mr. Hodgson,) have led us frequently to canvass and somewhat severely to examine its proceedings. And justice obliges us to state, that the more we have done this, the more have we been compelled to admire the wisdom and to venerate the piety of the men who constituted that assembly; and the more reluctant have we become to allow the least shadow of a doubt to rest upon either the purity of their motives, or the propriety of their measures.

Having said thus much on behalf of the Conference of 1795, it is but fair that we should briefly allude to the case of the "societies" at that period. The *feeling* of the societies on the subject of the sacraments is not unfairly represented by Mr. Hodgson. He allows that considerable dissatisfaction existed during the lifetime of Mr. Wesley; "that it required all the *prestige* of his name and authority to keep the spirit of discontent in abeyance; and that, in the latter part of his life, many societies smothered their discontent through a considerate regard for the growing infirmities of age." (P. 43.) He quotes the opinion of Dr. A. Clarke; namely, "That for many years before the death of Mr. Wesley, the great majority of our people ardently wished for the sacrament to be administered among themselves." (P. 44.) And when proceeding to state his final judgment upon the case of the Conference of 1795, he says, "We have made allowance, too, for the 'pressure from without;' and have conceded that *the blame of agitation* attaches more to the 'societies' than to the 'Conference.'" (P. 71.)

The question to which we shall devote a moment's consideration is this: How far did the societies of that period incur "*the blame of agitation?*" Observe, we speak of that agitation only which had the sacrament for its object. For it is sufficiently well known, and

ought to be kept in mind, that this was not the only question on which the Connexion was now agitated.

Now, from all that we have seen on the subject, it appears certain that the societies were really *the movement party*. The people generally and ardently desired the sacrament to be administered among themselves. But though earnest in the pursuit of their object, it does not appear that, to any considerable extent, their proceedings were characterized by unchristian violence. In justice to the societies, and in palliation of the movement, several facts ought also to be kept in mind. As,—

First, It was to Mr. Wesley and the preachers that the societies were chiefly indebted for their religious impressions, and for that change of character of which, by the grace of God, they had become the subjects. It is a melancholy truth that, in these affecting and really momentous particulars, the mass of the societies were but little, if at all, indebted to the clergy of their day. Men may talk as they please; but, sophistry and special pleading alike out of the question, considering the relation in which the societies stood to the clergy on the one hand, and to their own preachers on the other, had not their most powerful *sympathies* been decidedly in favour of the ministrations of the preachers, there would have been something positively *unnatural* in the case. Besides,—

Secondly, The question of the sacraments was not one of *feeling* merely; it was, with multitudes, a question of *conscience*. That an extensive and “most gratifying alteration” has since taken place both in the doctrine and character of the national clergy, is a fact which no impartial man will deny, and on account of which every good man ought to rejoice. But it is admitted, on all hands, that the clergy of that period were not only strangers in general to serious religion,

but, too frequently, *immoral* in their lives. The Methodists looked upon such men as absolutely unfit to "serve at the altar;" and against receiving the sacrament at the hands of such men they objected purely on the ground of conscience. No doubt the plea of conscience has been frequently abused. Still there are cases in which it may be justly urged; and this, we think, was plainly one. Indeed, we think much too highly of Mr. Hodgson to suppose, for a moment, that he has so little regard for the rights of conscience as seriously to plead for its *coercion* in a case like this. And yet he speaks approvingly of regulations, the known and legitimate *consequence* of which was, that, even in such a state of things, "Wesleyan communicants must, *of necessity*, have repaired to the church!" (p. 71;) and regrets the abolition of these coercive "regulations." To these must be added,—

Thirdly, The powerful consideration that, "in no small number of cases, the clergy were the persecutors and calumniators of the Wesleyan societies; that their sermons were often intemperate attacks upon their characters and opinions; and that the Methodists were frequently regarded as intruders at the table of the Lord, rather than welcome communicants." (*Watson's Observations*, &c., p. 142.) Not to mention instances in which the Methodists were actually repelled from the communion.

Now, putting all these things together, unless it can be proved that they sought to accomplish their object by some unchristian or intemperate means,—and this is not alleged against them,—we confess we are at a loss to imagine what "*blame*" can attach to the "societies" for ardently seeking this measure of relief. Respecting the Church and the Methodists at the period now referred to, Mr. Hodgson is of opinion "that grave

errors were committed *on both sides.*" Of course, he has a right to this opinion. He has declined, in favour of "more adventurous writers, the task of distributing the praise or censure in fair and rateable proportions." And in this we think he has acted wisely. Again we say it, we cannot believe this estimable writer will seriously defend a regulation, the proper effect of which was to *compel* thousands of truly pious and conscientious men either to receive the sacrament at the hands of an ungodly clergyman who persecutes and rudely drives them from his church, or to live in the habitual neglect of so divine an ordinance. And yet, excepting in so far as he could reconcile his mind to this revolting task, we believe he would find himself obliged to acquiesce in our conclusion, namely, That *no blame* can be attached to the "societies" for urging their request; whereas, much longer to have delayed the equitable concession would have been positively wrong on the part of the "Conference."

Mr. Hodgson's excellent pamphlet touches upon another subject which, for its own sake, we must briefly notice. At page 64, this gentleman remarks, "Mr. Wesley cautions his followers against considering their own service as a substitute for the service of the Establishment;" and quotes the following passage:—"But some may say, 'Our own service is public worship.' Yes; but not such as supersedes the church service. It pre-supposes public prayer, like the sermons at the University. If it were designed to be instead of the church service, it would be essentially defective. For it seldom has the four grand parts of public prayer, deprecation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving." (*Large Minutes*, p. 31.)

With regard to the use of the Liturgy in Wesleyan congregations, a practice which the Plan of Pacifi-

cation strongly *recommends*, we fully concur in the opinion of Mr. Watson, that "the fault lay in not making the use of the Liturgy the sole and peremptory *rule*; a measure which then would have been gladly accepted as a condition of opening the chapels, and by this time it would have become the established custom of the body." (*Observations*, p. 146, *note*.) And although a "peremptory rule" on this subject is now, of course, out of the question, wherever so good an object can be *peaceably* attained, we think it still desirable to introduce this practice.

Still, truth obliges us to state our conviction that the above remarks of Mr. Wesley have been unfairly dealt with. We do not impute to Mr. Hodgson any sinister design in quoting this passage. But in the ignominious *tract* upon which we have before animadverted, these words are evidently quoted for the purpose of making it appear that, according to Mr. Wesley's views, public worship as now generally conducted by the Methodists, must, of necessity, be "*essentially defective*." Now against any such use of Mr. Wesley's words we must protest, as being neither fair nor honest. We cannot believe that Mr. Wesley ever intended to affirm so harsh a position as that wherever this part of divine service is conducted without the use of a Liturgy, it must, of necessity, be "*essentially defective*." Neither do we believe such a position to be defensible on sound principles. Why should not *extempore* prayer be so conducted as to contain "the four grand parts of public prayer" above enumerated?

It appears to us, that the only proper foundation of Mr. Wesley's remarks is to be found in the peculiar manner in which the service of the Methodists was then designedly conducted. That service did, as stated in the quotation, *pre-suppose* public prayers; and, on other

accounts, "it was necessarily very brief." Indeed, we have Mr. Wesley's own authority for the statement, that he *advised* the preachers "not usually to exceed *four* or *five* minutes, either before or after sermon, in public prayers." (*Works*, vol. xiii., p. 353.) A very satisfactory reason, surely, (but the only valid one we have yet been able to imagine,) why that service could seldom contain "the four grand parts of public prayer, *deprecation*, *petition*, *intercession*, and *thanksgiving*." But now that a quarter of an hour upon the average is fairly available for that solemn exercise, which was then limited to "four or five minutes," if our public prayers are "essentially defective" in the above important particulars, the fault must be sought for, not in the want of a Liturgy, but in something else. Where the spirit of devotion really exists, the *gift* of prayer may be improved, by use and cultivation, to an almost indefinite extent. The subject is one of solemn moment. And it cannot be too deeply impressed upon the mind of those upon whom it officially devolves to conduct the public worship of Almighty God, that wherever the Liturgy is not used, the greater care ought to be taken to render this part of divine service as full, and as comprehensive, and as little defective in any of the before-mentioned particulars, as possible.

In conclusion, excepting only the point to which we have demurred, we feel obliged to Mr. Hodgson for his excellent pamphlet; and sincerely do we pray that the amiable and Christian spirit in which he writes may soon pervade all parties in the church of Christ. Whatever may become of his "Plan," &c., we honour his motives. We will venture farther to assure Mr. Hodgson that, whatever may be the future relation between the two parties to which his pamphlet more particularly refers, and to whatever extent the Methodists may

deem it right to rebuke the madness of individual intolerance, or to defend themselves against the unchristian attacks of *individual* clergymen, even should they *think* they have cause to complain that the conduct of such individuals is not more fully and openly discountenanced by the Church itself, the Methodists will not so far dishonour the *name* of their revered founder, and forget the *principles* by which their own conduct has ever been regulated, as to do any thing, great or small, “out of a spirit of wanton hostility to the Establishment.”

PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATED.

		Page
Matthew	x. 5—8, 14, 15	8
	xx. 25, 26	46
	xxviii. 18—20	8, 12
Luke	x. 1—16	8
Acts	i. 15—26	243, 244
	vi. 1—6	235
	xiv. 23	51—53
	xv. 2	119
	22, 23	236—242
	xx. 28	17, 44, 67, 139
Romans	xiii. 1, 2	136
1 Corinthians	iv. 1	23
	19—21	35
	v. 3—5	245—249
	ix. 16	16
2 Corinthians	vii. 15	41
	viii. 19	234
Galatians	vi. 6	97
Ephesians	iv. 8—13	9
Philippians	i. 1	140
1 Thessalonians	ii. 4	24, 205
	v. 12	44
1 Timothy	i. 3	25
	iii. 4	41
	13	85
	iv. 1, 2	66
	v. 17	42, 43
2 Timothy	ii. 2	54
	4	99
Titus	i. 5	54
Philemon	10	195
Hebrews	xiii. 7, 17	44
1 Peter	iv. 10, 11	86
	v. 2—4	41, 142
Revelation	ii. 20	25, 69
	xiv. 6	3

INDEX.

ADDRESS, annual, quoted, 4, 18, 90, 94, 156.

Allin, Rev. T., his "Address" quoted, 180—183.

——, his "Letters," general character of, 258.

———— strictures upon, 163—165, 172—177, 259—277.

——, his futile arguments in favour of lay-delegation, 173, 174, 191—202.

——, his injurious misrepresentations of Methodism, 175, 176, 233.

——, his general principles stated, &c., 186.

———— pernicious character of, 186—190.

Apostles, office and ministry of, 32—34.

——, character of their administration, 35—38.

Appeals, tribunal of, necessary, 126, *n*.

———— a scriptural institution, 169.

Auxiliary Fund, historic sketch of, 134—136.

Baxter, sketch of, 114, *n*.; quoted, 193.

Beza, remarks upon, 53, *n*.

Bishops, not, *jure divino*, superior to presbyters, 139—142.

Bloomfield, Dr., quoted, 42, 53, 241, 244, 250.

Bradburn, Rev. S., quoted, 80, 280.

Bridges, Rev. C., quoted, 17, 19, 97.

Burnet, Bishop, quoted, 9, 228, 249.

Call to the Christian ministry, divine and necessary, 15—17, 21.

———— how understood by the Methodists, 18—20.

Calmet, on the apostolic function, 33.

Campbell, Dr. G., quoted, 43, 54, 161.

Candidates for the ministry, regular mode of proposing, 58.

Chairmen of districts, election and responsibility of, 147.

Chapels, to be regarded as *res sacræ*, 209.

——, Wesleyan, settlement of, 207—209.

Chapel-Fund, historic sketch of, 132.

Χειροτονειν, explained, 52—54.

Children's Fund, character and objects of, 134.

Clarke, Dr. A., quoted, 16, 42, 313.

Class-meetings, nature and importance of, 89, 90.

Collections, Yearly and July, their objects, 131.

Conder's "Analytical View," &c., noticed, 124, *n*.

- Conference, Methodist, legislative authority of, 154—167.
 ———, appellate jurisdiction of, 169—171.
 ———, jurisdiction of, over its own members, 146.
 ———, responsibility of, with regard to doctrine, 27, 28.
 ———, the ultimate judge of ministerial qualification, 28.
 ———, propriety of this arrangement, 60.
 ———, in what it differs from the "General Assembly," 281.
- Confessions of faith, their object and propriety, 25, 26.
- Connexion, Wesleyan, ecclesiastical unity of, 112—114.
- Connexional principle, scriptural legitimacy of, 118—120.
 ———, advantages of, 120—129.
- Contingent Fund, its objects and immense importance, 131, 132.
- Contributions of members, law respecting, 100.
- Corinthian, incestuous, case of, 35, 245—249.
- Cranmer, on the *jus divinum* of episcopacy, 142, 152.
- Deacons, office, qualification, and appointment of, 84, 85, 235.
Διακονειν τραπεζαις, explained, 236.
- Discipline, pastors originally entrusted with, 39—45.
 ———, Methodist, not arbitrary, 49, 72.
 ———, general views of, 48—50.
- Dissension, causes of, 229—301.
- District-Meetings, jurisdiction of, 147, 148.
- Dixon, Rev. J., quoted, 113.
- Doctrine, Methodist, standard of, 26.
 ———, fidelity of the Conference with respect to,
 29—31.
 ———, unity of, in Methodism, 112, 124, *n*.
 ———, desideratum respecting, 92, *n*.
- Dwight quoted, 40, 42, 119, 126.
 ———, remarks upon, 246—248.
- Edinburgh Review, quoted, 114.
- Elders, lay-ruling, not sanctioned by Scripture, 42, *n*. ; 43, *n*.
- Επισκοπος*, explained, 77, 139, 140, 145.
- Επισκοποουντες*, explained, 142.
- Episcopacy, antiquity of, 143.
- Εθετο* explained, 17.
- Faction, a just cause of expulsion, 226.
 ———, criminality of, 227, 228.
- Financial department, general view of, 88, 89.
- Forsyth, Rev. J., his opinion of the New Connexion, 182, *n*.
- Foster, Rev. J. K., 196, *n*. ; remarks on, 296—298.

- Gill, Dr., remarks on, 40, 52, 68.
 Government, pastoral, an ordinance of God, 1, 45.
 Hammond, quoted, 12, 16, 53.
 Hill, Dr., quoted, 55, *n*.
 Hopkins, Bishop, quoted, 42, *n*.
 Independency, not the original form of church polity, 104, *n*. ;
 118, 119.
 ———, congregational, weakness of, 121—126.
 Isaac, Rev. D., quoted, 179, 219.
 Itinerant preaching, antiquity of, 106.
 ——— ministry, origin of, in Methodism, 107.
 ———, an essential part of the system, 107.
 ——— advantages of, 108—112.
 ——— inconveniencies of, 113.
 Κεκρικα, explained, 245.
 Ken, Bishop, quoted, 21.
 Knox, his views of episcopacy, 152, 153.
 Lay-administering, explained, 309, *n*.
 Lay-delegation, a useless innovation at best, 174, 203—209.
 ———, unscriptural and pernicious, 210—216.
 Leaders, their office and duties, 89.
 Leaders'-Meetings, business and authority of, 73, 90, 224, 225.
 Leeds, Regulations made at, vindicated, 259—266.
 Lightfoot, quoted, 243.
 Liturgy, on the use of, 316—318.
 Local preachers, their office and great utility, 91.
 ———, must be under the direction of the superintendent, 91.
 M'Crie, Dr., remarks on, 152.
 Maçknight, quoted, 40, 55, 85, 99.
 Matthias, case of, examined, 243, 244.
 Meetings, irregular, properly disallowed, 266—270.
 Members, not to be proposed at a Leaders'-Meeting, 72, *n*.
 ———, admission, trial, and expulsion of, 72—75.
 ———, what they are to contribute, 100.
 Methodism, catholic spirit of, 284—288.
 ———, economy of, characterized, 290.
 ———, remarkable features of, 281, 289.
 ———, doctrines of, noticed, 296—298.
 ———, friendly relation of, to the establishment, 285, 286.
 ———, often calumniated, 287.

- Methodism, spiritual and ecclesiastical unity of, 112, 113.
 ———, state of, in 1839, 295.
 ———, success of, 288, 289.
 ———, to what attributable, 289—291.
 ———, how separated from the church in 1795, 301, 302.
 Methodists, their position highly providential, 292.
 ———, have not departed from Mr. Wesley's principles, 76—81, 300—312.
 ———, their responsibility, 291.
 ———, their duty and prospects, 291—294.
 Ministers, Christian, qualifications of, 57.
 ———, official responsibility of, 23—25, 205, 218.
 ———, ought not to be entangled with worldly affairs, 96—99.
 ———, justly entitled to a competent maintenance, 96—98.
 ———, Wesleyan, regular mode of proposing, 58, 59.
 ———, must not follow trade, 98—100.
 ———, law respecting salary of, 101—103.
 ———, pastoral authority of, 48—50, 71—75, 223—225, 282.
 ———, pastoral equality of, 145, 149—151.
 ———, Dissenting, interchange among, 111, *n.*
 ———, New Methodist, bad condition of, *pref. v., n.*; 211—221.
 Ministry, Christian, a divine ordinance, 9, 10—13, 205.
 ———, designed to be perpetual, 10—13.
 ———, the end of, 66, 105, 193.
 ———, scriptural powers of, 45—48.
 ———, of the word, a minister's primary function, 65, 66, 96, 97.
 Montgomery, James, Esq., quoted, 290.
 Moore, Rev. H., quoted, 304.
 ———, his "letters of ordination," 306.
 Mosheim, quoted, 11, 33, 118, 120.
 ———, remarks upon, 34, 35.
 Myles, quoted, 79.
 New Connexion, weakness of, 252, *n.*
 ———, doctrinal laxity of, 185.
 ———, "Private Minutes" of, 278, *n.*
 ——— system, characterized, 257.
 ———, a failure, 254.
 ———, capital error of, 256, *n.*

- Officers, Wesleyan, rules respecting the appointment of, 92, 93.
- Offices, not to be filled by heterodox men, 92.
- Οικονομικὰν πεπιστευμαί, explained, 16.
- Ordination, scriptural, by presbyters and pastors only, 51—58, 141.
- , Wesleyan, mode of, 60, 61.
- Organs, to be under the control of the minister, 49, *n*.
- Παραίτου, explained, 40.
- Pastoral office defined, 64, 65.
- , functions of, ascertained, 65—69.
- authority, its nature and extent, 45—48.
- , not originally derived from the people, 68, 69, *nn*.
- Paul, the apostle, authority exercised by, 35—38.
- People, their right to a voice in the appointment of ministers, 56, 57.
- to some check upon the abuse of ministerial power, 69, 70.
- , Wesleyan, their rights already secured, 203, 204, 208, 209.
- Plan of Pacification, summary of its provisions, 157.
- , did not separate Methodism from the church, 301.
- , was not opposed to Mr. Wesley's principles, 302—312.
- Plans to be made by the superintendent or his colleagues, 49, *n*.
- Πληθος, explained, 239.
- Ποιμαίνειν, explained, 42, 45, 141, 142.
- Potter, Archbishop, quoted, 32.
- Powell, Rev. T., his "Essay" referred to, 61, *n*.
- Preachers, annual examination of, 147, *n*.
- , appointment of, solely with the Conference, 61—63.
- , octennial rule respecting, 107, *n*.
- Preachers, their right to conduct every part of divine worship must be maintained, 49, *n*.
- , those on trial, position of, 71.
- Presbyters, not, *jure divino*, inferior to bishops, 139—142.
- Qualifications of stewards, leaders, &c., 92.
- , scriptural, for the ministry, 57.
- Quesnel, quoted, 15, *n*.
- Robinson, of Leicester, notice of, 65, *n*.
- Rules, new, law of 1797 respecting, 162—165.
- Sacraments, the administration of, pastoral acts, 66, 67.

Sacraments, to be administered by preachers in full connexion only, 71.

———, administration of, in Methodism, no violation of Mr. Wesley's principles, 76—81, 301—312.

Salaries of preachers, fixed by the Quarterly-Meeting, 101, 176.

Sandwith, Dr. H., quoted, 79, 81, 289, 305.

Scriptures, a perfect rule of faith, 22.

———, contain the *principles* of order, but prescribe no *form*, 2—4.

———, recognise the right of private judgment, 22.

Separation from the church, Mr. Wesley's *RULE* concerning, 77, 78, 308.

———, how far effected by the Plan of Pacification, 301, 302.

Service in church hours, when allowed by Mr. Wesley, 82.

———, not a departure from the church, 82, 83.

———, among the Methodists, not essentially defective, 316—318.

Settlement of Methodist chapels, explained and vindicated, 207—209.

Society, temporal and spiritual affairs of, to be separated, 87, 281.

Societies in 1795, case of, considered, 313—316.

Southey, Dr., quoted, 4, 106.

Spring, Dr. G., quoted, 189, 226.

Stationing of the preachers solely with the Conference, 60—63.

Stewards, how to be appointed, 92, 236.

———, formerly appointed, &c., by the preachers, 259.

——— must keep regular accounts, 88.

——— must be regularly changed, 93.

Stillingfleet, quoted, 2, 9, 11, 43, 45.

Subordination, necessity of, 143, 145.

———, principle of, as exemplified in Methodism, 145—151.

Succession, the apostolic, note concerning, 61.

———, Mr. Wesley's opinion concerning, 77.

Superintendents, Wesleyan, their office, 149.

———, their authority as *ex officio* chairmen, 270—274.

———, Scottish, were invested with episcopal jurisdiction, 153.

System, important effects of, in Methodism, 112, 113.

Tickets, society, to whom they may be given, 72, *n.*

Timothy, the powers with which he was invested, 39.

- Timothy, the judge of ministerial qualification, &c., 54.
- Titus, his ministerial powers, 40, 41.
- Tomline, Bishop, quoted, 2.
- Tract, a vile one, noticed, 82, 83, 310, *n.*; 317.
- Trade, &c., not to be followed by Wesleyan ministers, 99.
- Trial, Wesleyan, of those who think they are "moved by the Holy Ghost" to preach, 20.
- , may be demanded by an accused member, 73.
- Trinity, the Holy, how identified with the call to the ministry, 17, *n.*
- in Unity, sole object of religious worship, 112.
- Trustees, their legal rights, 208.
- , how they may obtain the removal of an immoral or incompetent minister, 62.
- Union of churches, ancient and commendable, 118, 120.
- Vaughan, Dr., remarks upon, 137, *n.*
- Waddington, Rev. George, Church History by, quoted, 34, *n.*; 120, *n.*
- Wardlaw, Dr. R., quoted, 189.
- Watson, Rev. R., quoted, 5, 22, 26, 46, 56, 69, 116, 142, 144, 159, 165, 249, 286, 301.
- Welch, Mr. Charles, quoted, 121, 268.
- Wesley, Rev. John, his early impression as to the relative position of Methodism and the church, 78.
- , early prejudice in favour of episcopacy, 144.
- , later views concerning ditto, 77, 145.
- , the light in which he regarded the *ordained* preachers, 306.
- , his reasons for adopting the itinerancy, 107, 108.
- , RULE of his conduct in regard to the church, 77, 78, 305, 308.
- , sanctioned the administration of the sacraments by Wesleyan ministers, 79—81, 300—312.
- , his simplicity of purpose, 6.
- Widows of deceased ministers, provision for, 136.
- Worship, public, hint respecting the performance of, 318.
- , among the Methodists, not essentially defective, 317.
- , every part of, to be conducted by the minister, 49, *n.*

Works published by the same Author.

ETERNAL ELECTION AND REPROBATION
INSEPARABLE:

Or, the Identity of Preterition and Reprobation asserted: a Reply to "Eternal Reprobation disproved, by the Rev. J. Hargreaves." 8vo. Price 1s.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE

The Doctrine of the Scriptures: or, the Sentiments of the Revs. J. Wesley and R. Watson on this subject vindicated against Cavil and Misrepresentation; a consecutive Answer to the Rev. Abraham Scott's two Pamphlets, severally entitled, "The Result of an Enquiry," &c., and, "Justification defended," &c. 8vo. Price 1s.

THE OLD PROTESTANT DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFI-
CATION BY FAITH ASSERTED,

In opposition to the Doctrine of Justification by Works: the Sentiments of the Revs. J. Wesley and R. Watson on this subject FURTHER VINDICATED: a Reply to the Rev. Abraham Scott's Pamphlet, entitled, "The Gospel Method of Acceptance with God established," &c. 8vo. Price 1s.

REMARKS UPON THE LATE CONTROVERSY RE-
SPECTING THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION
BY FAITH:

In which the Origin, the Progress, and the Termination of the Dispute are briefly reviewed. A Final Answer to the Rev. Abraham Scott. 8vo. Price 3d.

N.B. Mr. Mason will now be able to supply a few complete sets of the Pamphlets on Justification by Faith.

BRIEF MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE AND HAPPY
DEATH OF SUSANNAH HARDCASTLE;

For several years a Scholar, and afterwards a Teacher, in the Wesleyan Sunday-School, South-Parade, Halifax. Price 4d. To Sunday-Schools, 3s. per dozen.

